

Merry Wives of Windsor,

COMEDY,

BY

Shakespeare

Mr. W. SHAKESPEARE.

Collated with the Oldest Copies, and Corrected;
With NOTES Explanatory, and Critical.

By Mr. THEOBALD.

I, Decus, i, nostrum: melioribus utere Fatis. Virg.

DUBLIN:

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M DCC XXXIX.

Dramatis Personæ.

SIR John Falstaff.

Fenton, *a young Gentleman of small Fortune, in Love with Mrs. Anne Page.*

Shallow, *a Country Justice.*

Slender, *Cousin to Shallow, a foolish Country Squire.*

Mr. Page, } *two Gentlemen, dwelling at Windsor.*

Mr. Ford, }

Sir Hugh Evans, *a Welch Parson.*

Dr. Caius, *a French Doctor.*

Host of the Garter, *a merry talking Fellow.*

Bardolph,

Pistol, } *Sharpers, attending on Falstaff.*

Nym,

Robin, *Page to Falstaff.*

William Page, *a Boy, Son to Mr. Page.*

Simple, *Servant to Slender.*

Rugby, *Servant to Dr. Caius.*

Mrs. Page, *Wife to Mr. Page.*

Mrs. Ford, *Wife to Mr. Ford.*

Mrs. Anne Page, *Daughter to Mr. Page, in Love with Fenton.*

Mrs. Quickly, *Servant to Dr. Caius.*

Servants to Page, Ford, &c.

SCENE, *Windsor: and the Parts adjacent*



THE

THE

(i) Merry Wives of WINDSOR.

ACT. I.

SCENE, Before Page's House in Windsor.

Enter Justice Shallow, Slender, and Sir Hugh Evans,

SHALLOW.



I R Hugh, persuade me not ; I will make
a *Star-Chamber* matter of it : if he were
twenty Sir *John Falstaffs*, he shall not
abuse *Robert Shallow, Esq;*

Slender. In the county of *Gloucester*,
justice of peace, and *Coram*.

Shal. Ay, cousin *Slender*, and *Cusphalorum*.

Slender. Ay, and *Rato-lorum* too ; and a gentleman born,

(i) *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.] Queen *Elizabeth* was so well
pleas'd with the admirable Character of *Falstaff* in the Two Parts of
Henry IV, that, as Mr. *Rowe* informs us, She commanded *Shake-
speare* to continue it for one Play more, and to shew him in Love.
To this Command We owe this Comedy of the *Merry Wives of
Windsor* : which, Mr. *Gildon* says, he was very well assur'd, our
Author finish'd in a Fortnight. But this must be meant only, as
Mr. *Pope* has observed, of the first imperfect Sketch of this Comedy,
printed in 1619. The Notice of a Play, published seventeen Years
after Queen *Elizabeth's* Death, does no ways come in Support of the
Tradition, that it was perform'd for that Princess's Entertainment.
But I have another old Quarto Edition of this Comedy, (which, I
presume, Mr. *Pope* never saw ; printed in 1602 ; which says in the
Title-page - - - As it hath been diverse times acted both before her
Majesty and elsewhere. The Reader will find the title of this old
Play at length, in my Catalogue of Editions prefix to this Work.

master parson, who writes himself *Armigero* in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *Armigero*.

Shal. Ay, that I do, and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slén. All his successors, gone before him, have don't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may; they may give the dozen white lúces in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Eva. The dozen white lowses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish, the salt-fish is an old Coat.

Slén. I may quarter, coz.

Shal. You may by marrying.

Eva. It is marring, indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Eva. Yes, per-lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for your self, in my simple conjectures; but that is all one: if Sir *John Falstaff* have committed disparagements upon you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

Shal. The council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Eva. It is not meet, the council hear of a riot; there is no fear of got in a riot: the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of got, and not to hear a riot; take your viza-ments in that.

Shal. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Eva. It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it; and there is also another device in my prain, which, peradventure, prings good discretions with it: there is *Anne Page*, (2) which is daughter to master *George Page*, which is pretty virginity.

Slén. Mrs. *Anne Page*? she has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

(2) ---- which is Daughter to Master Thomas Page.] The whole Set of Editions have negligently blunder'd one after another in *Page's* Christian Name in this Place; tho' Mr. *Page* calls him *George* afterwards in at least six several Passages.

Eva. It is that ferry person for all the orld, as just as you will desire ; and seven hundred pounds of monies, and gold and silver, is her grandfire upon his death's-bed (got deliver to a joyful resurrections) give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old : it were a good mention, if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between master *Abraham* and mistress *Anne Page*.

Slén. Did her grand-fire leave her seven hundred pounds?

Eva. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Slén. I know the young gentlewoman ; she has good gifts.

Eva. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

Shal. Well ; let us see honest Mr. *Page* : is *Falstaff* there ?

Eva. Shall I tell you a lie ? I do despise a liar, as I do despise one that is false ; or as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir *John*, is there ; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-wishers. I will peat the door [*Knocks*] for master *Page*. What, ho ? got pless your house here.

Enter Mr. Page.

Page. Who's there ?

Eva. Here is got's plessing, and your friend, and justice *Shallow* ; and here's young master *Slender* ; that, peradventures, shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Page. I am glad to see your worships well. I thank you for my venison, master *Shallow*.

Shal. Master *Page*, I am glad to see you ; much good do it your good heart : I wish'd your venison better ; it was ill kill'd. How doth good mistress *Page* ? and I thank you always with my heart, la ; with my heart.

Page. Sir, I thank you.

Shal. Sir, I thank you ; by yea and no, I do.

Page. I am glad to see you, good master *Slender*.

Slén. How does your fallow greyhound, Sir ? I heard say, he was out-run on *Cotfale*.

Page. It could not be judg'd, Sir.

Slén. You'll not confels, you'll not confels.

L. 2

Shal.

220 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Shal. That he will not, 'tis your fault, 'tis your fault ; 'tis a good dog.

Page. A cur, Sir.

Shal. Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog ; can there be more said ? he is good and fair. Is Sir *John Falstaff* here ?

Page. Sir, he is within ; and I would, I could do a good office between you.

Eva. It is spoke, as a christians ought to speak.

Shal. He hath wrong'd me, master *Page*.

Page. Sir, he doth in some fort confels it.

Shal. If it be confels'd, it is not redress'd ; is not that so, master *Page* ? he hath wrong'd me ; indeed, he hath ; at a word, he hath ; believe me, *Robert Shallow* Esquire saith, he is wrong'd.

Page. Here comes Sir *John*.

Enter Sir John Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

Fal. Now, master *Shallow*, you'll complain of me to the King ?

Shal. Knight, you have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter.

Shal. Tut, a pin ; this shall be answer'd.

Fal. I will answer it strait : I have done all this. That is now answer'd.

Shal. The council shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you, if 'twere not known in council ; you'll be laugh'd at.

Eva. *Pauca verba*, Sir *John*, good worts.

Fal. Good worts ? good cabbage. *Slender*, I broke your head : what matter have you against me ?

Slen. Marry, Sir, I have matter in my head against you, and against your cony-catching rascals, *Bardolph*, *Nym*, and *Pistol*.

Bar. You *Banbury* cheese !

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Pist. How now, *Mephostophilus*?

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Nym. Slice, I say; *pauca, pauca*; slice, that's my humour.

Slen. Where's *Simple*, my man? can you tell, cousin?

Eva. Peace: I pray you: now let us understand; there is three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that is, master *age*; *fidelicet*, master *Page*; and there is my self, *fidelicet*, my self; and the three party is, lastly, and finally, mine host of the garter.

Mr. *Page*. We three to hear it, and end it between them.

Eva. Ferry goot; I will make a prief of it in my note-book, and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.

Fal. Pistol, ———

Pist. He hears with ears.

Eva. The tevil and his tam! what phrase is this, he hears with ear? why, it is affectations.

Fal. Pistol, did you pick master *Slender*'s purse?

Slen. Ay, by these gloves, did he; (or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else,) of seven groats in mill-fixpences, and two *Edward* shovel-boards, that cost me two shilling and two pence a-piece, of *Yead Miller*, by these gloves.

Fal. Is this true, Pistol?

Eva. No; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

Pist. Ha, thou mountain foreigner! ——— Sir *John*, and master mine,

I combat challenge of this latten bilboe: (3)

Word

(3) I combat challenge of this Latin bilboe] Our modern Editors have distinguish'd this Word, *Latin*, in *Italick* Characters, as if it was address'd to Sir *Hugh*, and meant to call him *pedantick Blade*, on account of his being a Schoolmaster, and teaching *Latin*. But I'll be bold to say, in this they do not take the Poet's Conceit. *Pistol* barely calls Sir *Hugh* Mountain-foreigner, because he had interpos'd in the Dispute, but then immediately demands the Combat of *Slender*, for having charg'd him with picking his Pocket. The old *Quarto's* write it *Latten*, as it should be, in the common Characters: And, as a Proof that the Author design'd This should be address'd

dress'd to *Slender*, Sir *Hugh* does not there interpose one Word in the Quarrel. But what then signifies - - - - - *latten Bilbo*? Why, *Pistol* seeing *Slender* such a slim, puny, Wight; would intimate, that he is as thin as a Plate of that compound Metal, which is call'd *latten*: and which was, as we are told, the Old *Orichalc*. Monsieur *Dacier*, upon this Verse in *Horace's* Epistle de *Arte Poeticâ*.

Tibia non ut nunc Orichalco vineta, &c.

says, *Est une espece de Cuivre de montagne, come son nom mesme le temoigne; c'est ce que nous appellons aujourd'buy du leton.* "It is a sort of Mountain-Copper, as its very Name imports, and which we at this time of Day call *Latten*." *Scaliger* upon *Festus* had said the same Thing. The Metallists tell us, it is Copper mingled with *Lapis Calaminaris*. The learned Part of my Readers will forgive me, if I attempt the Correction of a Passage in *Hesychius*, upon the Subject of *Orichalc*, which has been tamper'd with, but not cur'd, I think, to Satisfaction. *Ὀρείχαλκος, χαλκός, χρυσῷ, ἐκπῶς, ἢ κρήνη ἀρχίχαλκος.* (In the first place, the Series and Order of *Hesychius* shew he meant to write his Theme, *Ὀείχαλκος*, without the Diphthong.) *Sopringius* has conjectur'd, the last Word should be *αὐείχαλκος*. But what than has *κρήνη* to do here? *Orichalcum* does not signify a Fountain; nor does *latten* *Sequester*, or any body else to my Knowledge, tell us of a Fountain, Lake, or Spring, that bore such a Name: Perhaps, the whole should be thus pointed and reform'd: *Ὀείχαλκος, χαλκός, χρυσῷ ἐκπῶς. ἢ κέρμα τι ἀρχή, χαλκός.* *Orichalcum*, as *auri amulum: vel, compositum quoddam; principium cuius, &c.* *Orichalc*, a sort of Brass like Gold; or a Compound Metal, the foundation of which was brass. *Stephanus, de Urbibus*, tells us of a Stone produc'd at *Andeira*, which, mingled with Brass, became *Orichalc*. *ΚΡΑΘΕΪΣ χαλκῷ, Ὀρείχαλκος γίγνεται.* *Strabo* is the Foundation for what *Stephanus* says; who, speaking of this Stone, adds, If it be burnt with a certain Earth it melts to a counterfeit Silver: which Earth, having Brass mingled with it, comes to that compounded Metal which some call *Orichalc*. *ἢ προσλαβῶσα χαλκὸν τὸ καλέμενον γίνεῃ* *ΚΡΑΜΑ, ὅτινες ἀρείχαλκον καλῶσι.* The old Glossaries likewise have, *Aurichalca, κερματινα*: which *Junius* in his Book, *De Pietura Veterum*, corrects to *ΚΡΑΜΑΤΙ*: But *Martinius*, I find, disapproves of the Correction. These Quotations, I think, are somewhat in Support of the Conjecture I have offer'd. A Word to the Passage quoted from *Strabo*, and I shall dismiss this Criticism. *Casaubon* very justly objects to the Tautology of *τὸ καλέμενον, & ὅτινες καλῶσι*. He thinks either something is wanting after *καλέμενον*: or that it should be expung'd. If I am not mistaken, *Strabo* might have wrote, with the Change only of one Letter, *τὸ καλὸν μὲν ὃν γίνεῃ κέρμα, perpulchra quidem fit Mixtura*: i. e. a most beautiful Compound is produced. The *Orichalc*, we know, was so bright a Metal, that, as *Isidore* says, it had the

Splendo

Word of denial in thy *Labra's* here ;
Word of denial ; froth and scum; thou ly'st.

Slen. By these gloves, then 'twas he.

Nym. Be advis'd, Sir, and pass good humours: I will say marry trap with you, if you run the base humour on me ; that is the very note of it.

Slen. By this hat, then he in the red face had it ; for tho' I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

Fal. What say you, *Scarlet* and *John* ?

Bard. Why, Sir, for my part, I say, the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.

Eva. It is his five senses: fie, what the Ignorance is !

Bard. And being say, Sir, was, as they say, cashier'd ; and so conclusions pass the car-eires.

Slen. Ay, you spake in *Latin* then too ; but 'tis no matter ; I'll never be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick: If I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

Eva. So got udg me, that is a virtuous mind.

Fal. You hear all these matters deny'd, gentlemen ; you hear it.

Enter Mistress Anne Page, with wine.

Page. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in ; we'll drink within. [Exit Anne Page.]

Slen. Oh heav'n ! this is mistress *Anne Page*.

Enter Mistress Ford and Mistress Page.

Page. How now, mistress *Ford* ?

Fal. Mistress *Ford*, by my troth, you are very well met ; by your leave, good mistress. [Kissing her.]

Page. Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome: come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner ; come, gentlemen ; I hope, we shall drink down all unkindness.

[Ex. Fal, Page, &c.]

L 4.

Manent

Splendor of Gold, and the Hardness of Brass: and *Pliny* tells us, it was put under some Chrysolites, as a Foil, to assist their Lustre.

Manent Shallow, Evans, and Slender.

Slen. I had rather than forty shillings, I had my book of songs and sonnets here.

Enter Simple.

How now, *Simple*, where have you been? I must wait on my self, must I? you have not the book of riddles about you, have you?

Simp. Book of riddles! why, did you not lend it to *Alice Shortcake* (4) upon *All-hallowmas* last, a fortnight afore *Martlemas*?

Shal. Come, coz; come, coz: we stay for you: a word with you, coz: marry this, coz; there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by *Sir Hugh* here, do you understand me?

Slen. Ay, Sir you shall find me reasonable: if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

Shal. Nay, but understand me.

Slen. So I do, Sir.

Eva. Give ear to his motions, Mr. *Slender*: I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slen. Nay, I will do as my cousin *Shallow* says: I pray you, pardon me; he's a Justice of peace in his country, simple tho' I stand here.

Eva. But that is not the question: the question is concerning your marriage.

Shal. Ay, there's the point, Sir.

Eva. Marry, is it; the very point of it, to Mrs. *Anne Page*.

Slen. Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

(4) Upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas.] Sure, *Simple*'s a little out in his Reckoning. Allhallowmas is almost five Weeks after Michaelmas. But may it not be urg'd, it is design'd, *Simple* should appear thus ignorant, to keep up Character? I think, not. The simplest Creatures (nay, even Naturals) generally are very precise in the Knowledge of Festivals, and marking how the Seasons run: And therefore I have ventur'd to suspect, our Poet wrote *Martlemas*, as the Vulgar call it; which is near a fortnight after *All-Saints Day*, i. e. eleven Days, both inclusive.

Eva.

Eva. But can you affection the 'oman? let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold, that the lips is parcel of the mind: therefore precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

Shal. Cousin *Abraham Slender*, can you love her?

Slen. I hope, Sir; I will do, as it shall become one that would do reason.

Eva. Nay, got's lords and his ladies, you must speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

Shal. That you must: will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

Slen. I will do a greater thing than that upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

Shal. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz; what I dois to pleasure you, coz: can you love the maid?

Slen. I will marry her, Sir, at your request: but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heav'n may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are marry'd, and have more occasion to know one another: (5) I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt: but if you say, marry her, I will marry her, that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

Eva. It is a ferry discretion answer; save, the fall is in th'ort dissolutely: the ort is according to our meaning, resolutely; his meaning is good.

Shal. Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

Slen. Ay, or else I would I might be hang'd, la.

Enter Mistress Anne Page.

Shal. Here comes fair mistress *Anne*: would I were young for your sake, mistress *Anne*.

(5) *I hope, upon Familiarity will grow more Content.*] Certainly, the Editors in their Sagacity have murder'd a Jest here. It is design'd, no Doubt; that *Slender* should say *decrease*, instead of *increase*; and *dissolved* and *dissolutely*, instead of *resolved* and *resolutely*: but to make him say, on the present Occasion, that upon Familiarity will grow more *Content*, instead of *Contempt*, is disarming the Sentiment of all its Salt and Humour, and disappointing the Audience of a reasonable Cause for Laughter.

226 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Anne. The dinner is on the table ; my father desires your worship's company.

Shal. I will wait on him, fair mistress *Anne*.

Eva. Od's plessed will, I will not be absence at the Grace. [Ex. Shallow and Evans.]

Anne. Will't please your worship to come in, Sir ?

Slen. No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily ; I am very well.

Anne. The dinner attends you, Sir.

Slen. I am not a hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, Sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin *Shallow* ; [Ex. Simple.] a Justice of peace sometime may be beholden to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, 'till my mother be dead ; but what though, yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

Anne. I may not go in without your worship ; they will not sit, 'till you come.

Slen. I'faith, I'll eat nothing ; I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you, Sir, walk in.

Slen. I had rather walk here, I thank you : I bruis'd my shin th'other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence, three venays for a dish of stew'd prunes ; and by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so ? be there bears i'th' town ?

Anne. I think, there are, Sir ; I heard them talk'd of.

Slen. I love the sport well, but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in *England*. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not ?

Anne. Ay, indeed, Sir.

Slen. That's meat and drink to me now ; I have seen *Sackerston* loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain ; but, I warrant you, the women, have so cry'd and shriek'd at it, that it past : but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em, they are very ill-favour'd rough things.

Enter Mr. Page.

Page. Come, gentle Mr. *Slender*, come ; we stay for you.

Slen. I'll eat nothing, I thank you, Sir.

Page,

Page. By cock and pye, you shall not chuse, Sir; come; come.

Slen. Nay, pray you lead the way.

Page. Come on, Sir.

Slen. Mistress *Anne*, your self shall go first.

Anne. Not I, Sir; pray you, keep on.

Slen. Truly, I will not go first, truly-la: I will not do you that wrong.

Anne. I pray you, Sir.

Slen. I'll rather be unmannerly, than troublesome; you do your self wrong, indeed-la. *[Exeunt.]*

Re-enter Evans and Simple.

Eva. Go your ways, and ask of Doctor *Caius*' house which is the way; and there dwells one mistress *Quickly*, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Simp. Well, Sir,

Eva. Nay, it is petter yet; give her this letter; for it is a'oman that altogethers acquaintance with mistress *Anne Page*; and the letter is to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to mistress *Anne Page*: I pray you, begone; I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and chæese to come.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE changes to the Garter-Inn.

Enter Falstaff, Host, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol and Robin.

Fal. **M**INE host of the garter,——

Host. What says my bully rock? speak schollarly, and wisely.

Fal. Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

Host. Disceard, bully *Hercules*, cashier; let them wag; trot, trot.

Fal. I fit at ten pounds a week.

Host. Thou'rt an Emperor, *Cæsar*, *Keisar* and *Pheas-*

ant.

car. I will entertain *Bardolph*, he shall draw, he shall tap; said I well, bully *Hector*?

Fal. Do so, good mine host.

Host. I have spoke, let him follow; let me see thee froth, and live; I am at a word; follow.

[*Exit Host.*

Fal. *Bardolph*, follow him; a tapster is a good trade; an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a wither'd serving-man, a fresh tapster; go, adieu.

Bard. It is a life that I have desir'd: I will thrive.

[*Exit Bard.*

Pist. O base *Hungarian* wight, wilt thou the spigot wield?

Nym. He was gotten in drink, is not the humour conceited? His mind is not heroick, and there's the humour of it.

Fal. I am glad, I am so quit of this tinderbox; his thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskilful finger, he kept not time.

Nym. The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.

Pist. Convey, the Wife it call: steal? foh; a fico for the phrase!

Fal. Well, Sirs, I am almost out at heels.

Pist. Why then, let kibes ensue.

Fal. There is no remedy: I must conycatch, I must shift.

Pist. Young ravens must have food.

Fal. Which of you know *Ford* of this town?

Pist. I ken the wight, he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pist. Two yards and more.

Fal. No quips now, *Pistol*: indeed, I am in the waste two yards about; but I am now about no waste, I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to *Ford's* wife: I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her familiar stile, and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be english'd right, is, *I am Sir John Falstaff's*.

Pist. He hath study'd her well, and translated her well; out of honesty into *English*.

Nym.

The Merry Wives of Windfor. 229

Nym. The anchor is deep : will that humour pass ?

Fal. Now the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse : she hath a legion of angels.

Pist. As many devils entertain ; and to her, boy, say I.

Nym. The humour rises ; it is good ; humour me the angels.

Fal. I have writ me here a letter to her ; and here another to *Page's* wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examin'd my parts with most judicious *Iliads* ; sometimes, the beam of her view guilded my foot ; sometimes my portly belly.

Pist. Then did the sun on dunghill shine. [*Aside.*]

Nym. I thank thee for that humour.

Fal. O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass. Here's another letter to her ; she bears the purse too ; (6) she is a region in *Guiana*, all gold and bounty. I will be Cheater to them both, and they shall be *Exchequers* to me ; they shall be my *East* and *West Indies*, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to mistress *Page* ; and thou this to mistress *Ford* : we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pist. Shall I Sir *Pandarus* of *Troy* become ; And by my side wear steal ? then *Lucifer* take all !

Nym. I will run no base humour ; here, take the humour-letter, I will keep the haviour of reputation.

(6) *She is a region in Guiana, all Gold and Bounty*] If the Tradition be true, (as, I doubt not, but it is ;) of this Play being wrote at Queen *Elizabeth's* Command ; this Passage, perhaps, may turn with a probable Conjecture that it could not appear till after the Year 1598. The mention of *Guiana*, then so lately discover'd to the *English*, was a very happy Compliment to Sir *W. Raleigh*, who did not begin his Expedition for South *America* till 1595. and returned from it in 1596. with an advantageous Account of the great Wealth of *Guiana*. Such an Address of the Poet was likely, I imagine, to have a proper Impression on the People, when the Intelligence of such a golden Country was fresh in their Minds, and gave them Expectations of immense Gain.

230 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Fal. Hold, Sirrah, bear you these letters tightly,
Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores. [*To Robin*]
Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hail-stones, go;
Trudge, plod away o'th' hoof, seek shelter, pack!
Falstaff will learn the humour of the age, (7)
French thrift, you rogues; my self, and skirted Page.

Ex. Falstaff and Boy.

Pist. Let vultures gripe thy guts; for gourd and *Ful-*
lam holds:
And high and low beguiles the rich and poor.
Tetter I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,
Base *Phrygian Turk*!

Nym. I have operations in my head, which be hu-
mours of revenge.

Pist. Wilt thou revenge?

Nym. By welkin, and her star.

Pist. With wit, or steel?

Nym. With both the humours, I:

I will discuss the humour of this love to *Ford*.

Pist. And I to *Page* shall eke unfold,

How *Falstaff*, varlet vile,

His dove will prove, his gold will hold,

And his soft couch defile.

Nym. My humour shall not cool; I will incense
Ford to deal with poison; (8) I will possess him with
yellow.

(7) *Falstaff will learn the Honour of the Age,*] What was this
Honour, which he was to learn? Frugality; the retrenching his Ex-
pences, and keeping only a Boy to wait on him. Had the Editors
been cut out for *Collators*; they might have observ'd the old *Quarto's*
read, *the Humour of the Age*, i. e. the frugal Fashion of the Times.
So in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

The Fashion of the World is to avoid Cost, and you encounter it.
And Honour and Humour; I have observ'd, are very often reciprocally
mistaken for one another in old *English Plays*.

(8) *I will possess him with Jealousies, for this revolt of mine is*
dangerous:] This is the reading of the modern Editions; the old
Copies have it *Yellowness*; i. e. the Symptom of Jealousy. So
Beatrice, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, speaking of *Claudio's* having
jealous Suspicions, says;

The Count is neither sad; nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil,
Count; civil, as an Orange; and something of that jealous Complexion.
Again,

yellowness; for the Revolt of Mien is dangerous; that is my true humour.

Pist. Thou art the *Mars* of male-contents: I second thee; troop on. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to Dr. Caius's House.

Enter mistress Quickly, Simple, and John Rugby.

Quic. **W**HAT, *John Rugby*! I pray thee, go to the casement, and see if you can see my master, master Doctor *Caius*, coming; if he do, i'faith, and find any body in the house, here will be old abusing of God's patience, and the King's *English*.

Rug. I'll go watch.

[*Exit Rugby.*]

Quic. Go, and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire. An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal; and, I warrant you, no tell-tale, nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is, that he is given to pray'r; he is something peevish that way; but no body but has his fault; but let that pass. *Peter Simple*, you say, your name is.

Sim. Ay, for fault of a better.

Quic. And master *Slender*'s your master?

Sim. Ay, forsooth.

Again, *This revolt of mine, &c.* If *Nym* speaks this of himself, he speaks very improperly, to call it a *Revolt*, when he is discarded by his Master. The old Copies read, as I have restor'd in the Text; and the *Revolt of mine*, I take to signify the *Change of Complexion*. And then *Nym* must mean, I will make him so jealous, till he changes Colour with its Working; and then it will break out into some violent Effects, that will be dangerous to *Falstaff*. For *Mine* (or *Mien*, as it is more generally written,) does not only signify, the Air, Gesture, and Bearing of any Person; but likewise the Look and Turn of Countenance; *Oris Species; nativa vultus Compositio*: --- *Visage bon, ou mauvais, qu'on fait paroître aux gens selon qu'ils nous plaisent*, &c. as *Richelieu* explains it: that Look, or Turn of Countenance, which we shew to People, according as they please us, or not. Our Author, in other places, takes notice of the Change of Colour to be a Symptom of Anger, Envy, &c. as it certainly is in Nature, according to the Spring of that Passion which excites it.

Quit.

232 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Quick. Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring knife?

Sim. No, forsooth; he hath but a little wee-face, with a little yellow beard, (9) a *Cain-colour'd* beard.

Quick. A softly sprighted man, is he not?

Sim. Ay, forsooth; but he is as tall a man of his hands, as any is between this and his head: he hath fought with a warrener.

Quic. How say you? oh, I should remember him; does he not hold up his head, as it were? and strut in his gate?

Sim. Yes, indeed, does he.

Quick. Well, heav'n send *Anne Page* no worse fortune! Tell master parson *Evans*, I will do what I can for your master: *Anne* is a good girl, and I wish—

Enter Rugby.

Rug. Out, alas! here comes my master.

Quick. We shall all be shent; run in here, good young man; go into this closet; [*Shouts Simple in the Closet.*] He will not stay long. What, *John Rugby*? *John*! what *John*, I say; go, *John*, go enquire for my master; I doubt, he be not well, that he comes not home: and down, down, a-down-a, &c. [*Sings.*]

Enter Doctor Caius.

Caius. Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys; pray you, go and vetch me in my closet *un boitier verd*; a box, a green-a box; do intend vat I speak? a green-a box.

Quick. Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you. I am glad, he went not in himself, if he had found the man, he would have been horn-mad. [*Aside.*]

Caius. Fe, fe, fe, fe, *ma fai, il fait fort chaud; je m'en vaie à la Cour—la grande affaire.*

(9) *A cane-colour'd beard.*] Thus the latter Editions. I have restor'd with the old Copies. *Cain* and *Judas*, in the Tapestries and Pictures of old, were represented with yellow boards.

Quick,

Quic. Is it this, Sir?

Caius. Ouy, mettez le au mon pocket : Depechez, quickly ; ver is dat knave Rugby?

Quic. What, John Rugby! John!

Rug. Here, Sir.

Caius. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby ; come, take-a your Rapier, and come after my heel to the Court.

Rug. 'Tis ready, Sir, here in the porch.

Caius. By my trot, I tarry too long : od's me : *Que ay je oublie ?* dere is some simples in my closet ; dat I will not for the world I shall leave behind.

Quic. Ay-me, he'll find the young man there, and be mad.

Caius. O Diable, Diable ! vat is in my closet ? villaine, Larron ! Rugby, my rapier. [*Pulls Simple out of the Closet.*]

Quick. Good master, be content.

Caius. Wherefore shall I be content-a ?

Quic. The young man is an honest man.

Caius. What shall de honest man do in my closet ? dere is no honest man, dat shall come in my closet.

Quic. I beseech you, be not so flegmatick, hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from parson Hugh.

Caius. Vell.

Simp. Ay, forsooth, to desire her to——

Quic. Peace, I pray you.

Caius. Peace-a your tongue, speak-a your tale.

Sim. To desire this honest Gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to mistress Anne Page for my master in the way of marriage.

Quick. This is all, indeed-la ; but I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire, and need not.

Caius. Sir Hugh send-a-you ? Rugby, (10) baillez me some paper ; tarry you a little a-while.

(10) *Ballow me some Paper ;*] Thus all the Editions hitherto ; and, I suppose, the Editors thought this a designed Corruption of the Word *borrow*. But are we to imagine the Poet's Doctor had not a Scrap of Paper in his House, but must send out to borrow some? As Caius is represented a *Frenchman*, and generally speaks half *French*, half *English*, it is much more probable to believe, our Author wrote *Baillez me some Paper*, i. e. fetch, bring, give me some. So the French say, *Baillez la main*, Give me your hand ; *Bailler une oeillade*, to give one the Wink, &c.

Quick,

234 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Quic. I am glad, he is so quiet; if he had been thoroughly moved; you should have heard him so loud, and so melancholy; but notwithstanding, man, I'll do for your master what good I can; and the very yea and the no is, the *French Doctor* my master, (I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house, and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all my self.)

Sim. 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

Quick. Are you a-vis'd o' that? you shall find it a great charge; and to be up early, and down late. But notwithstanding, to tell you in your ear, I would have no words of it, my master himself is in love with mistress *Anne Page*; but notwithstanding that, I know *Anne's* mind, that's neither here nor there.

Caius. You jack'nape; give a this letter to *Sir Hugh*; by gar, it is a shallenge: I will cut his throat in de parke, and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make ——— you may be gone; it is not good you tarry here; by gar, I will cut all his two stones; by gar he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog. [Exit Simple.]

Quic. Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter 'aver dat: do you not tell a-me, dat I shall have *Anne Page* for myself? by gar. I will kill de jack priest; and I have appointed mine host of *de Farterre* to measure our weapon; by gar, I will my self have *Anne Page*.

Quic. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well: we must give folks leave to prate; what, the good-ger!

Caius, Rugby, come to the Court with me; ——— by gar, if I have not *Anne Page*, I shall turn your head out of my door; ——— follow my heels, *Rugby*.

[Exit Caius and Rugby.]

Quic. You shall have *An* fool's head of your own! No, I know *Anne's* mind for that; never a woman in *Windsor* knows more of *Anne's* mind than I do, nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heav'n.

Fent. [within.] Who's within there, ho?

Quic.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 235

Quic. Who's there. I trow? come near the house, I pray you.

Enter Mr. Fenton.

Fent. How now, good woman, how dost thou?

Quic. The better, that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fent. What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

Quic. In truth, Sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way, I praise heav'n for it.

Fent. Shall I do any good, think'st thou? shall I not lose my suit?

Quic. Troth, Sir, all is in his hands above; but notwithstanding, master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you: have not your worship a wart above your eye?

Fent. Yes, marry, have I; and what of that?

Quic. Well, thereby hangs a tale; good faith, it is such another Nan; but, I darest, an honest maid as ever broke bread; we had an hour's talk of that wart: I shall never laugh but in that maid's company! but, indeed, she is given too much to allicholy and musing; but for you——well——go to——

Fent. Well, I shall see her to day; hold, there's money for thee: let me have thy voice in my behalf; if thou see'st her before me, commend me——

Quic. Will I? ay, faith, that we will; and I will tell your worship more of the wart, the next time we have confidence, and of other wooers.

Fent. Well farewell, I am in great haste now. [*Exit.*]

Quic. Farewel to your worship. Truly, an honest gentleman, but Anne loves him not; I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon it, what have I forgot? [*Exit.*]

A C T.

A C T II.

SCENE, before Page's house.

*Enter Mrs. Page with a letter.**Mrs. PAGE.*

WHAT, have I 'scap'd love-letters in the holy-day-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? let me see:

Ask me no reason, why I love you? for tho' love use reason for his precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor: you are not young, no more am I, go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I. ha! ha! then there's more sympathy? you love sack, and so do I, would you desire better sympathy? let it suffice thee, mistress Page, at the least if the love of a soldier can suffice, that I love thee. I will not say, pity me, 'tis not a soldier-like phrase; but I say, love me:

By me, thine own true Knight, by day or night,

Or any kind of light, with all his might,

For thee to fight.

John Falstaff.

What a Herod of Fury is this? O wicked, wicked world! one that is well nigh worn to pieces with age, to show himself a young gallant! what unweighed behaviour hath this *Flemish* drunkard pickt, i'th' devil's name, out of my Conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? why, he hath not been thrice in my company: what should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth, heav'n forgive me: why, I'll exhibit (11) a Bill in the Parliament for the putting down of

(11) -- a bill in the Parliament for the putting down of Men:] What Mrs. Page, put down the whole Species *Unius ob noxam*, for a single Offender's Trespas? Don't be so unreasonable in your Anger. But 'tis a false Charge against you. I am persuaded, a short Monosyllable is dropt out, which once restor'd, would qualify the matter. We must necessarily read, -- *for the putting down of fat Men.* -- Mrs. Ford says in the very ensuing Scene, *I shall think the worse of fat Men, as long as I have an eye, &c.* And in the old Quarto's, Mrs. Page, so soon as she has read the letter, says, *Well, I shall trust fat Men the worse, while I live, for his sake:* And he is call'd, the fat Knight, the greasy Knight, by the Women throughout the Play.

fat

fat men : how shall I be reveng'd on him ? for reveng'd I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Enter Mrs. Ford.

Mrs. Ford. Mistress *Page*, trust me, I was going to your house.

Mrs. Page. And trust me, I was coming to you ; you look very ill.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that ; I have to shew to the contrary.

Mrs. Page. Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford. Well, I do then ; yet I say, I could shew you to the contrary : O mistress *Page*, give me some counsel.

Mrs. Page. What's the matter, woman ?

Mrs. Ford. O woman ! if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour.

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman, take the honour ; what is it ? dispense with trifles ; what is it ?

Mrs. Ford. If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment, or so, I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What, thou liest ! Sir *Alice Ford* ! these Knights will hack, and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

Mrs. Ford. We burn day-light ; here, read, read ; perceive, how I might be knighted : I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking ; and yet he would not swear ; prais'd women's modesty ; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words ; but they do no more adhere, and keep place together, than the hundredth Psalm to the tune of *Green Sleeves*. What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tun of oyl in his belly, a shore at *Windsor* ? how shall I be reveng'd on him ? I think, the best way were to entertain him with hope, 'till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like ?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter, but that the name of *Page* and *Ford* differs. To thy great comfort in this
my-

mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter; but let thine inherit first, for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant, he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank-space for different names; nay, more; and these are of the second edition: he will print them out of doubt, for he cares not what he puts into the press, when he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess, and lie under mount *Pelion*. Well, I will find you twenty lascivious turtles, ere one chaste man.

Mrs. Ford. Why, this is the very same, the very hand, the very words; what doth he think of us?

Mrs. Page. Nay, I know not; it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain my self like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he knew some Strain in me, that I know not my self, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

Mrs. Ford. Boarding, call it you? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.

Mrs. Page. So will I; if he come under my hatches, I'll never to sea again. Let's be reveng'd on him; let's appoint him a meeting, give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead him on with a fine baited delay, 'till he hath pawn'd his horses to mine Host of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him, that may not sully the chariness of our honesty: oh, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Why, look, where he comes, and my good man too; he's as far from jealousy, as I am from giving him cause; and that, I hope, is an unmeasurable distance.

Mrs. Ford. You are the happier woan.

Mrs. Page. Let's consult together against this greasy Knight. Come hither. [*They retire.*]

Enter Ford with Pistol, Page with Nym.

Ford. Well, I hope, it be not so.

Pistl. Hope is a curtal-dog in some affairs.

Sir John affects thy wife.

Ford. Why, Sir, my wife is not young.

Pistl.

Pist. He wooes both high and low, both rich and poor,

Both young and old, one with another, *Ford*;
He loves thy gally-mawfry, *Ford*, perpend.

Ford. Love my wife?

Pist. With liver burning hot: prevent, or go thou,
like Sir *Astleon*, he, with Ring-wood at thy heels—O,
odious is the name.

Ford. What name, Sir:

Pist. The horn, I say, farewell.

Take heed, have open eye, for thieves do foot by night.

Take heed ere summer comes, or cuckoo-birds affright.

Away, Sir corporal *Nym*. ———

Believe it, *Page*, he speaks sense. [Exit Pistol.

Ford. I will be patient; I will find out this.

Nym. And this is true: I like not the humour of lying; he hath wrong'd me in some humours: I should have born the humour'd letter to her; but I have a sword, and it shall bite upon my necessity. He loves your wife; there's the short and the long. My name is Corporal *Nym*; I speak, and I avouch; 'tis true: my name is *Nym*, and *Falstaff* loves your Wife. Adieu; I love not the humour of bread and cheese: adieu.

[Exit Nym.

Page. The humour of it, quoth 'a! here's a fellow frights humour out of its wits.

Ford. I will seek out *Falstaff*.

Page. I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

Ford. If I do find it: well.

Page. (12) I will not believe such a *Cataian*, tho' the priest

(12) *I will not believe such a Cataian, tho', &c.*] This is a Piece of Satire that did not want its Force at the time of this Play's appearing; tho' the History, on which it is grounded, is become obsolete, and lost to general Knowledge. In the Year 1575, Captain *Martin Frobisher* (who was afterwards knighted, for Services against the *Spanish Armada*;) being furnished with Adventurers to the Project, set out upon his Discovery of a Passage to *Cataia*, near *China*, by the North-west Seas. Having sail'd sixty Degrees North-west beyond *Friesland*, he came to Land upon a Place inhabited by Savages, from whence he brought a piece of black Stone, like Sea-Coal, which, upon his Return, being assay'd by the Goldsmiths, was judg'd

to

240 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

priest o' th' town commended him for a true man;

Ford. 'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford come forwards.

Page. How now, *Meg*?

Mrs. Page. Whither go you, *George*? hark you.

Mrs. Ford. How now, sweet *Frank*, why art thou melancholy?

Ford. I melancholy! I am not melancholy. Get you home, go.

Mrs. Ford. Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head. Now, will you go, mistress *Page*?

Mrs. Page. Have with you. You'll come to dinner, *George*? Look, who comes yonder; she shall be our messenger to this poultry Knight.

Enter Mistress Quickly.

Mrs. Ford. Trust me, I thought on her, she'll fit it.

Mrs. Page. You are come to see my daughter *Anne*?

Quic. Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good mistress *Anne*?

Mrs. Page. Go in with us, and see; we have an hour's talk with you.

[Ex. Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Mrs. Quic.]

Page. How now, master *Ford*?

Ford. You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

Page. Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

Ford. Do you think there is truth in them?

to be very rich in Gold-Ore. This encourag'd him to a second Voyage thither the next Season; when he freighted two Vessels home with this black Stone: and in 1578, his Project was so risen in Credit, that he set sail a third time with fifteen good Ships; and freighted them all, homewards, out of the same Mines. But, to see the odd Fate that too often attends such Discoveries! Tho' the Prospect of immense Treasures was at first so plausible, that it was given out with Certainty, *Cataia* was *Solomon's Ophir*; yet, on a severe Trial, this boasted Gold-Ore prov'd to be mere Dross: and that falling short of the expected Value, and the Adventurers of their expected Gains, the Project fell so low in Repute, that *Cataians* and *Frobishers* became By-words for such vain Boasters, as promis'd more than they could make out, and therefore deserv'd not to be credited.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 241

Page. Hang 'em, slaves; I do not think, the Knight would offer it; but these, that accuse him in his intent toward our wives, are a yoke of his discarded men; very rogues, now they be out of service.

Ford. Were they his men?

Page. Marry, were they

Ford. I like it never the better for that. Does he lye at the *Garter*?

Page. Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend his voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lye on my head.

Ford. I do not misdoubt my wife, but I would be loth to turn them together; a man may be too confident; I would have nothing lye on my head; I cannot be thus satisfy'd.

Page. Look, where my ranting Host of the *Garter* comes; there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purse, when he looks so merrily. How now, mine Host.

Enter Host and Shallow.

Host. How now bully *Rock*? thou'rt a gentleman, cavaliero-justice, I say.

Shal. I follow, mine Host, I follow. Good even, and twenty, good master *Page*. Master *Page*, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.

Host. Tell him, cavaliero-justice; tell him, bully *Rock*.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir *Hugh* the *Welch* priest, and *Cainus* the *French* doctor.

Ford. Good mine Host o'th' *Garter*, a word with you.

Host. What say'st thou bully *Rock*?

Shal. Will you go with us to behold it? my merry Host hath had the measuring of their weapons, and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe me, I hear, the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

Host. Hast thou no suit against my Knight, my guest-cavalier?

M

Ford.

242 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Ford. None, I protest ; but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him, (13) and tell him, my name is *Brook* ; only for a jest.

Hof. My hand, bully : thou shalt have egress and regress ; said I well ? and thy name shall be *Brook*. It is a merry Knight. (14) Will you go an-heirs ?

Shal. Have with you, mine host.

Page. I have heard, the *Frenchman* hath good skill in his rapier.

Shal. Tut, Sir, I could have told you more ; in these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccado's, and I know not what : 'tis the heart, master *Page* ; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Hof. Here, boys, here, here : shall we wag ?

Page. Have with you ; I had rather hear them scold than fight. [Exeunt *Hof.*, *Shallow* and *Page*.]

Ford. Tho' *Page* be a secure fool, (15) and stand so

(13) *And tell him, my Name is Brook ;* Thus both the old *Quarto's* ; and thus most certainly the Poet wrote. We need no better Evidence, than the Pun that *Falstaff* anon makes on the Name, when *Brook* lends him some burnt Sack.

Such Brooks are welcome to me, that overflow with such Liquor.

The Players, in their Editions, alter'd the Name to *Broom* : But how far that Name will sert with that jest, is submitted to common Sense. Their Successors, however, of the Stage (like the old Priest, who had read *Mumpsimus* in his Breviary, instead of *Sumpsimus*, too long to think of altering it ;) continue to this Day to call him, Master *Broom*.

(14) *Will you go an-heirs ?* I can make nothing of this Reading, which hath possess'd all the Editions. The Word is not to be traced ; and, consequently, I am apt to suspect, must be corrupted. I should think, the *Hof* meant to say, either,

Will you go on here ?

Pointing out the Way, which was to lead them to the Combatants as he afterwards says, *Here, boys, here, here, shall we wag ?* Or,

Will you go, myn-heers ?

i. e. my Masters : Both these make plain Sense ; and are not remote from the Traces of the Text : but, without some such Alteration, the Passage seems utterly unintelligible to me.

(15) *And stand so firmly on his Wife's Frailty,* No, surely ; *Page* stood tightly to the Opinion of her honesty, and would not entertain a Thought of her being *frail*. I have therefore ventur'd to substitute a Word correspondent to the Sense requir'd ; and one, which our Poet frequently uses, to signify *conjugal Faith*.

firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily. She was in his company at *Page's* house; and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look farther into't; and I have a disguise to sound *Falstaff*: if I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestow'd.

[*Exit.*]

S C E N E *changes to the Garter-Inn.*

Enter Falstaff and Pistol.

Fal. I Will not lend thee a penny.
Pist. Why then the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open. ——— I will retort the sum in equipage.

Fal. Not a penny. I have been content, Sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn; I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you, and your couch-fellow, *Nim*, or else you had look'd through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damn'd in hell for swearing to gentlemen, my friends, ydu were good soldiers, and tall fellows. And when mistress *Bridget* lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honour, thou hadst it not.

Pist. Didst thou not share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

Fal. Reason; you rogue, reason: think'st thou, I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you: (16) go, a short knife, and a throng, to your manor of *Pickt-batch*; go, you'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you stand up-

(16) Go, a short knife, and a throng,] All the old Copies have it, *throng*: as I believe, the Author design'd; i.e. a short knife and a Crond, the two requisites for a Pick-pocket. *Pickt-batch*, as we may find by many Places in *B. Jonson*, was a noted Harbour for Thieves and Strumpets.

244 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

on your honour! why, thou unconscionable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the term of my honour precise. I, I, I my self sometimes, leaving the fear of heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge and to lurch; and yet you rogue will entorse your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lettice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! you will not do it, you!

1st. I do relent; what wouldst thou more of Man?

Enter Robin.

Rob. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Fal. Let her approach.

Enter Mistress Quickly.

Quick. Give your worship good morrow.

Fal. Good morrow, good wife.

Quick. Not so, had it please your worship.

Fal. Good maid, then.

Quick. I'll be sworn, as my mother was, the first hour I was born.

Fal. I do believe the sweeter: what with me?

Quick. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Fal. Two thousand, fair woman, and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Quick. There is one mistress Ford, Sir; I pray, come a little nearer this ways: I my self dwell with Mr. Doctor Caius.

Fal. Well, on: mistress Ford, you say.

Quick. Your worship says very true: I pray your worship, come a little nearer this ways.

Fal. I warrant thee, no body hears: mine own people, mine own people.

Quick. Are they so? heav'n bless them, and make them his servants.

Fal. Well, mistress Ford, what of her?

Quick. Why, Sir, she's a good creature. Lord, lord, your

your worship's a wanton ; well, heav'n forgive you, and all of us, I pray—

Fal. Mistress *Ford*, come, mistress *Ford*—

Quic. Marry, this is the short and the long of it ; you have brought her into such a canaries, as 'tis wonderful : the best Courtier of them all, when the Court lay at *Windsor*, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches ; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly ; all musk ; and so rustling, I warrant you, in silk and gold, and in such alligant terms, and in such wine and sugar of the best, and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart ; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her. I had my self twenty angels given me this morning ; but I defy all angels, in any such sort as they say, but in the way of honesty ; and I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all : and yet there has been Earls, nay, which is more, Pensioners ; but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

Fal. But what says she to me ? be brief, my good *She-Mercury*.

Quick. Marry, She hath receiv'd your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times ; and she gives you to notify, that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

Fal. Ten and eleven.

Quic. Ay, forsooth ; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of : master *Ford*, her husband, will be from home. Alas ! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him, he's a very jealousie-man ; she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

Fal. Ten and eleven : woman, commend me to her, I will not fail her.

Quic. Why, you say well : But I have another messenger to your worship ; mistress *Page* has her hearty commendations to you too ; and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one (I tell you) that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in *Windsor*, whoe'er be the other ; and she bad

me tell your worship, that her husband is seldom from home, but, she hopes, there will come a time, I never knew a woman so doat upon a man; surely, I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

Quic. Blessing on your heart for't.

Fal. But I pray thee, tell me this; has *Ford's* wife, and *Page's* wife, acquainted each other how they love me?

Quic. That were a jest, indeed; they have not so little grace, I hope; that were a trick, indeed! but mistress *Page* would desire you to send her your little *Page*, of all loves: her husband has a marvellous infection to the little *Page*; and, truly, master *Page* is an honest man. Never a wife in *Windsor* leads a better life, than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she lists; all is as she will; and truly, she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in *Windsor*, truly, she is one. You must send her your *Page*; no remedy.

Fal. Why, I will.

Quic. Nay, but do so then; and, look you, he may come and go between you both, and in any case have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind: and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good, that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Fal. Fare thee well; commend me to them both: there's my purse, I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman. This news distracts me.

[*Ex. Quick. and Robin.*]

Fist. This punk is one of *Cupid's* carriers:
Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights;
Give fire; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all!

[*Exit Pistol.*]

Fal. Say'st thou so, old *Jack*? go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body, than I have done; will they yet

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 247

yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expence of so much money, be now a gainer? good body, I thank thee; let them say, 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter Bardolph.

Bard. Sir *John*, there's one master *Brook* below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Fal. *Brook* is his Name?

Bard. Ay, Sir.

Fal. Call him in; [*Ex. Bardolph.*] such *Brooks* are welcome to me, that o'erflow with such liquor. Ah! ah! mistress *Ford* and mistress *Page*, have I encompass'd you? go to, *via!*

Re-enter Bardolph, with Ford disguis'd.

Ford. Bless you, Sir.

Fal. And you, Sir; would you speak with me?

Ford. I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

Fal. You're welcome; what's your will? give us leave, drawer. [*Ex. Bardolph.*]

Ford. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is *Brook*.

Fal. Good master *Brook*, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good Sir *John*, I sue for yours; not to charge you; for I must let you understand, I think my self in better plight for a lender than you are, the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseason'd intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lye open.

Fal. Money is a good soldier, Sir, and will on.

Ford. Truth, and I have a bag of money, here, troubles me; if you will help me to bear it, Sir *John*, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford. I will tell you, Sir, if you will give me the hearing.

248 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Fal. Speak, good master *Brook*, I shall be glad to be your servant.

Ford. Sir, I hear, you are a scholar ; (I will be brief with you ;) and you have been a man long known to me, tho' I had never so good means, as desire, to make my self acquainted with you : I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own Imperfections ; but, good Sir *John*, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier ; sith you your self know, how easie it is to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well : Sir, proceed.

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is *Ford*.

Fal. Well, Sir.

Ford. I have long lov'd her ; and, I protest to you, bestow'd much on her ; follow'd her with a doating observance ; ingross'd opportunities to meet her ; fee'd every slight occasion, that could but niggardly give me sight of her ; not only bought many Presents to give her, but have given largely to many, to know what she would have given : briefly, I have pursued her, as love hath pursu'd me, which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means ; meed, I am sure, I have received none ; unless experience be a jewel ; That I have purchas'd at an infinite rate, and That hath taught me to say this ;

" Love like a shadow flies, when substance love pursues ;

" Pursuing That that flies, and flying what pursues.

Fal. Have you receiv'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands ?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Have you importun'd her to such a purpose ?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Of what quality was your love then ?

Ford. Like a fair house, built on another man's ground ; so that I have lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me ?

Ford.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 149

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that tho' she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her misth so far, that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir *John*, here is the heart of my purpose: You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentick in your place and person, generally allow'd for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

Fal. O Sir!

Ford. Believe it, for you know it; there is money; spend it, spend it; spend more, spend all I have, only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this *Ford's* wife; use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemence of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? methinks you prescribe to your self very preposterously.

Ford. O, understand my drift; she dwells so sectrely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present it self; she is too bright to be look'd against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves; I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattel'd against me. What say you to't, Sir *John*?

Fal. Master *Brook*, I will first make bold with your money, next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy *Ford's* wife.

Ford. O good Sir!

Fal. Master *Brook*, I say, you shall.

Ford. Want no money, Sir *John*, you shall want none.

Fal. Want no mistress *Ford*, master *Brook*, you shall want none; I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment. Even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between parted from me; I say, I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave, her husband, will be

forth; come you to me at night, you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am blest in your acquaintance: do you know Ford, Sir?

Fal. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave, I know him not: yet I wrong him, to call him poor; they say, the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money, for the which his wife seems to me well favour'd. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

Ford. I would you knew Ford, Sir, that you might avoid him, if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue; I will flare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know, I will predominate over the peasant; and thou shalt lye with his wife: Come to me soon at night; Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his stile; thou, master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold: come to me soon at night.

[Exit.

Ford. What a damn'd *Epicurean* rascal is this! my heart is ready to crack with impatience! Who says, this is improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him, the hour is fixt, the match is made; would any man have thought this? see the hell of having a false woman! my bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me the wrong. Terms, names; *Amaimon* sounds well, *Lucifer*, well; *Barbason*, well; yet they are devils additions, the names of fiends: but cuckold, wittol, cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. *Page* is an ass, a secure ass, he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous: I will rather trust a *Fleming* with my butter, parson *Hugh* the *Welchman* with my cheese, an *Irish-man* with my *A-quavite* bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with her self: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises: and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. Heav'n be prais'd for my jealousy!

Eleven

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 251

Eleven o'clock the hour ; I will prevent this, detect my wife, be reveng'd on *Falstaff*, and laugh at *Page* : I will about it : better three hours too soon, than, a minute to late. Fie, fie, fie, ; cuckold, cuckold, cuckold !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE. *changes to Windsor-Park.*

Enter Caius and Rugby.

Caius. TACK *Rugby* !

Rug. Sir.

Caius. Vat is de clock, *Jack* ?

Rug. 'Tis past the hour, Sir, that Sir *Hugh* promis'd to meet.

Caius. By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come ; he has pray his pible well, dat he is no come : by gar, *Jack Rugby*, he is dead already, if he be come.

Rug. He is wise, Sir, he knew, your worship would kill him if he came.

Caius. By gar, de herring is not so dead as me. vill make him. Take your rapier, *Jack*, I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

Rug. Alas, Sir, I cannot fence.

Caius. Villany, take you rapier.

Rug. Forbear, here's company.

Enter Host, Shallow, Slender and Page.

Host. 'Bless thee, bully-doctor.

Shal. 'Save you, Mr. Doctor *Caius*.

Page. Now, good Mr. Doctor.

Slender. Give you good morrow, Sir.

Caius. Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for ?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foigne, to see thee traverse, to see thee here, to see thee there, to see thee pass thy puncto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my *Ethiopian* ? Is he dead, my *Francisco* ? ha, bully ? what says my *Æsculapius* ? my *Galen* ? my heart of elder ? ha ? is he dead, bully-stale ? is he dead ?

Caius.

252 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Caius. By gar, he is de coward Jack-priest of de world; he is not show his face.

Host. Thou art a *Castalian king-Urinal*: He *Ar* of Greece, my boy.

Caius. I pray you bear witness, that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

Shal. He is the wiser man, Mr. Doctor; he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies: if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions: Is it not true, master Page?

Page. Master Shallow, you have your self been a great fighter, tho' now a man of peace.

Shal. Body-kins, Mr. Page, tho' I now be old, and of peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one; tho' we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, Mr. Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Mr. Page.

Page. 'Tis true. Mr. Shallow.

Shal. It will be found so, Mr. Page. Mr. Doctor *Caius*, I am come to fetch you home; I am sworn of the peace; you have shew'd your self a wise physician, and Sir *Hugh* hath shown himself a wise and patient church man: you must go with me, Mr. Doctor.

Host. Pardon, guest-justice; a word, monsieur mock-water.

Caius. Mock-water? vat is dat?

Host. Mock-water, in our *Engliss* tongue, is valour, bully.

Caius. By gar, then I have as much mock-vater as de *Engliss* man, scurvy-jack dog priest; by gar, me vill cut his eare.

Host. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

Caius. Clapp r-e claw? vat is dat?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius. By gar, me do look, he shall clapper-de-claw me; for by gar, me vill have it.

Host. And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

Caius. Me tank you for dat.

Host. And moreover, bully: but first, Mr. Guest, and Mr. Page, and eek *Cavaliero Slender*, go you through the town to *Frogmore*.

Page.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 253

Page. Sir *Hugh* is there, is he?

Host. He is there; see, what humour he is in; and I will bring the Doctor about the fields: will it do well?

Shal. We will do it.

All. Adieu, good Mr. Doctor.

[*Ex.* *Page*, *Shal.* and *Slen.*]

Caius. By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to *Anne Page*.

Host. Let him die; but, first, sheath thy impatience; throw cold water on thy choler; go about the fields with me through *Frogmore*; I will bring thee where mistress *Anne Page* is, at a farm-house a feasting; and thou shalt woo her. (17) Try'd Game, said I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you vor dat: by gar, I love you: and I shall procure a you de good guest; de Earl, de Knight, de Lords, de Gentlemen, my patients.

Host. For the which I will be thy adversary toward *Anne Page*: said I well?

Caius. By gar, 'tis good, vell said.

Host. Let us wag then.

Caius. Come at my heels, *Jack Rugby*. [*Exeunt.*]

A C T III.

SCENE, *Frogmore near Windsor.*

Enter Evans, and Simple.

E V A N S.

I Pray you now, good master *Slender's* servingman, and friend *Simple* by your name, which way have

(17) *And thou shalt woo her. Cride-Game,*] Thus the old *Folio's*. The *Quarto's* with a little Difference. *And thou shalt wear her cry'd Game. Said I well?* Neither of the Readings furnish any Idea; nor can be genuine. *Try'd Game*, as I have restor'd it, may well signify, Thou old Cock of the Game; thou experienced Sinner; and might be reasonably apply'd to *Caius*, who was an old Batcheler, and had Dame *Quickly* for his Housekeeper.

you

254 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

you look'd for master *Caius*, that calls himself *Doctor of Physick*?

Simp. Marry, Sir, the *Pitty-wary*, the *Park-ward*, every way, old *Windsor* way, and every way but the town way.

Eva. I most feheemently desire you, you will also look that way.

Simp. I will, Sir.

Eva. 'Pless my soul, how full of chollars I am, and trempling of mind? I shall be glad, if he have deceiv'd me; how melanchollies I am! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard, when I have good opportunities for the orke: 'Pless my soul!

[*Sings, being afraid.*

By shallow rivers, to whose falls (18)

Melodious birds sing madrigalls;

There will we make our peds of roses;

And a thousand fragrant posies.

By shallow—— 'Mercy on me, I have a great dispositions to cry. *Melodious birds sing madrigals*—— *When as I sat in Pabilon;*—— *and a thousand vagrant posies.*—— *By shallow, &c.*

Simp. Yonder he is coming this way, Sir *Hugh*.

Eva. He's welcome. *By shallow rivers, to whose falls*——

Heav'n prosper the right: what weapons is he?

Simp. No weapon, Sir; there comes my master, Mr. *Shallow*, and another gentleman from *Frogmore*, over the stile, this way.

Eva. Pray you, give me my gown, or else keep it in your arms.

Enter Page, Shallow, and Slender.

Shal. How now, master Parson? good morrow, good

(18) *By shallow Rivers,*] The Stanza, which Sir *Hugh* repeats here, is part of a sweet little Sonnet of our Author's, and printed among his Poems, call'd, *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*. *Milton* was so enamour'd with this Poem, and the *Nymph's Reply* to it, that he has borrow'd the Close of his *L' Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso* from them—— I don't know, whether it has been generally observ'd, but it is with wonderful Humour, in his singing, that Sir *Hugh* intermixes with his Madrigal the first Line of the 137th singing *Psalms*.

Sir

Sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Sten. Ah, sweet *Anne Page*!

Page. Save you, good *Sir Hugh*.

Eva. 'Pless you from his mercy-sake, all of you.

Shal. What? the sword and the word? do you study them both, *Mr. Parson*?

Page. And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatick day?

Eva. There is reasons and causes for it.

Page. We are come to you, to do a good office, *Mr. Parson*.

Eva. Ferry well: what is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, be-like, having receiv'd wrong by some Person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience, that ever you saw.

Shal. I have lived fourscore years, and upwards; I never heard a man of his place, gravity and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Eva. What is he?

Page. I think, you know him; *Mr. Doctor Caius*, the renowned *French* phyfician.

Eva. Got's will, and his passion of my heart! I had as lief you should tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page. Why?

Eva. He has no more knowledge in *Hibocrates* and *Galen*; and he is a knave, besides; a cowardly knave as you would desire to be acquainted withal.

Page. I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

Sten. O sweet *Anne Page*!

Enter Host, Caius, and Rugby.

Shal. It appears so, by his weapons: keep them asunder; here comes *Doctor Caius*.

Page. Nay, good *Mr. Parson*, keep in your weapon.

Shal. So do you, good *Mr. Doctor*.

Host. Disarm them, and let them question; let them keep their limbs whole, and hack our *English*.

Caius.

256 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Caius. I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear : wherefore vill you not meet a-me ?

Eva. Pray you, use your patience in good time.

Caius. By gar, you are de coward, de *Jack dog*, *John ape*.

Eva. Pray you, let us not be laughing-stocks to other mens humours : I desire you in friendship, and will one way or other make you amends ; I will knog your urinal about your knave's cogs-comb, for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius. *Diable!* *Jack Rugby*, mine Host, de *Jarter*, have I not stay for him, to kill him ? have I not, at de place I did appoint ?

Eva. As I am a christian's soul, now look you, this is the place appointed ; I'll be judgment by mine Host of the Garter.

Host. Peace, I say, *Gallia and Gaul*, *French and Welch*, soul curet and body-curer.

Caius. Ay, dat is very good, excellent.

Host. Peace, I say ; hear mine Host of the Garter. Am I politick ? am I subtle ? am I a *Machiavel* ? shall I lose my Doctor ? no ; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my Parson ? my Priest ? my Sir *Hugh* ? no ; he gives me the proverbs and the noverbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial ; so : Give me thy hand, celestial ; so. Boys of art, I have deceived you both : I have directed you to wrong places : your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burn'd sack be the Issue. Come lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lad of peace, follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

Slen. O sweet *Anne Page* !

[*Ex. Shal. Slen. Page and Host.*]

Caius. Ha ! do I perceive dat ? have you make a-de-sot of us, ha, ha ?

Eva. This is well, he has made us his vlouting stog. I desire you, that we may be friends ; and let us knog our prains together to be revenge on this same scald-scurvy-cogging companion, the Host of the Garter.

Caius. By gar, with all my heart : he promise to bring me where is *Anne Page* ; by gar, he deceive me too.

Eva.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 257

Exit. Well, I will smite his noddles, pray you follow.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *The Street, in Windsor.*

Enter Mistress Page, and Robin.

Mrs. Page. **N**AY, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Rob. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man, than follow him like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page. O, you are a flattering boy; now You'll be a Courtier.

Enter Ford.

Ford. Well met, mistress *Page*; whither go you?

Mrs. Page. Truly, Sir, to see your wife; is she at home?

Ford. Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company; I think if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mrs. Page. Be sure of that, two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

Mrs. Page. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of: what do you call your Knight's name, sirrah?

Rob. Sir *John Falstaff*.

Ford. Sir *John Falstaff*?

Mrs. Page. He, he; I can never hit on 's name; there is such a league between my good man and he. Is your wife at home, indeed?

Ford. Indeed, she is.

Mrs. Page. By your leave, Sir; I am sick, till I see her.
[*Exeunt Mrs. Page and Robin.*]

Ford. Has *Page* any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty mile,
as

258 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve-score; he pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage; and now she's going to my wife, and *Falstaff's* boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind: and *Falstaff's* boy with her! good plots; they are laid, and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well, I will take him, then torture my wife; pluck the borrowed Vail of modesty from the so seeming mistress *Page*, divulge *Page* himself for a secure and wilful *Atheon*, and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim. The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search; there I shall find *Falstaff*: I shall be rather praised for this, than mocked; for it is as positive as the earth is firm, that *Falstaff* is there: I will go.

To him, Enter *Page*, *Shallow*, *Slender*, *Hof*, *Evans* and *Caius*.

Shal. Page, &c. Well met, Mr. *Ford*.

Ford. Trust me, a good knot: I have good cheer at home, and, I pray you, all go with me.

Shal. I must excuse my self, Mr. *Ford*.

Slen. And so must I, Sir; we have appointed to dine with Mrs. *Anne*, and I would not break with her for more money than I'll speak of.

Shal. We have linger'd about a match between *Anne Page* and my cousin *Slender*, and this day we shall have our answer.

Slen. I hope, I have your good will, father *Page*.

Page. You have, Mr. *Slender*; I stand wholly for you; but my wife, master Doctor, is for you altogether.

Caius. Ay, by gar, and de maid is love-a-me: my nurse-a-Quickly tell me so much.

Hof. What say you to young Mr. *Fenton*? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holy-day, he smells *April* and *May*; he will carry it, he will carry it, 'tis in his buttons, he will carry it.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you: the Gentleman is of no Having, he kept company with the wild Prince

Prince and Poinz: he is of too high a region, he knows too much; no, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance. If he take her, let him take her simply; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you, heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner; besides your cheer you shall have sport: I will shew you a monster. Mr. Doctor, you shall go, so shall you, Mr. Page; and you, Sir *Hugh*.

Shal. Well, fare you well: we shall have the freer wooing at Mr. Page's.

Caius. Go home, *John Rugby*, I come anon.

Hof. Farewel, my hearts; I will to my honest Knight *Falstaff*, and drink canary with him.

Ford. I think, I shall drink in Pipe-wine first with him: I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

All. Have with you, to see this monster. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to Ford's House.

Enter Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Page, and Servants with a basket.

Mrs. Ford. **W**HAT, *John*, what, *Robert*!
Mrs. Page. Quickly, quickly: is the buck-basket

Mrs. Ford I warrant. What, *Robin*, I say.

Mrs. Page. Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford. Here set it down.

Mrs. Page. Give your men the charge, we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, *John* and *Robert*, be ready here hard-by in the brew-house, and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this basket on your shoulders; that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whittlers in *Datchet-Mead*, and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the *Thames-side*.

Mrs. Page. You will do it?

Mrs. Ford. I ha' told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are call'd.

Mrs.

260 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Mrs. Page. Here comes little *Robin*.

Enter Robin.

Mrs. Ford. How now, my Eyas-musket, what news with you?

Rob. My master *Sir John* is come in at your back-door, mistress *Ford*, and requests your company.

Mrs. Page. You little Jack-a-lent, have you been true to us?

Rob. Ay, I'll be sworn; my master knows not of your being here, and hath threatned to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for he swears he'll turn me away.

Mrs. Page. Thou'rt a good boy; this secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose. I'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford. Do so; go tell thy master, I am alone; mistress *Page*, remember you your cue. [*Exit Robin.*]

Mrs. Page. I warrant thee; if I do not act it, his me. [*Exit Mrs. Page.*]

Mrs. Ford. Go to then; we'll use this unwholsome humidity, this gross watty pumpion—we'll teach him to know Turtles from Jays.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? why now let me die; for I have liv'd long enough: this is the period of my ambition: O this blessed hour!

Mrs. Ford. O sweet *Sir John*!

Fal. *Mrs. Ford*, I cannot cog; I cannot prate, mistress *Ford*: now shall I sin in my wish. I would, thy husband were dead; I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford. I your lady, *Sir John*? alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

Fal. Let the Court of *France* shew me such another; I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond: thou hast the right arched bent of the brow, that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any *Venetian* attire.

Mrs.

Mrs. Ford. A plain kerchief, Sir *John*: my brows become nothing else, nor that well neither.

Fal. Thou art a tyrant to say so; thou would'st make an absolute Courtier; and the firm fixure of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gate, in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert; if fortune thy foe were not, nature is thy friend: come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford. Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

Fal. What made me love thee? let that persuade thee. There's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say, thou art this and that, like many of these lisp'ing haw-thorn buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like *Bucklers-berry* in simpling time; I cannot: but I love thee, none but thee, and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford. Do not betray me, Sir; I fear, you love mistress *Page*.

Fal. Thou might'st as well say, I love to walk by the *Counter-gate*, which is as hateful to me as the reek of a *Lime-kiln*.

Mrs. Ford. Well, heav'n knows how I love you, and you shall one day find it.

Fal. Keep in that mind: I'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

Rob. [quitskin.] Mistress *Ford*, mistress *Ford*, here's mistress *Page* at the door, sweating and blowing, and looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

Fal. She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

Mrs. Ford. Pray you, do so; she's a very tattling woman.
[*Falstaff* hides himself.]

Enter Mrs. Page.

What's the matter? how now?

Mrs. Page. O mistress *Ford*, what have you done? you're sham'd, y'are overthrow'n, you are undone for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What's the matter, good mistress *Page*.

Mrs.

Mrs. Page. O well-a-day, mistress Ford, having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion.

Mrs. Ford. What cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Page. What cause of suspicion? out upon you; how am I mistook in you?

Mrs. Ford. Why, alas! what's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in *Windsor*, to search for a gentleman, that, he says, is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

Mrs. Ford. Speak louder — [Aside] 'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. Pray heav'n it be not so, that you have such a man here; but 'tis most certain, your husband's coming with half *Windsor* at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you: if you know your self clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend; here, convey, convey him out. Be not amaz'd, call all your senses to you, defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do? there is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame, so much as his peril. I had rather than a thousand pound, he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame, never stand you had rather, and you had rather; your husband's here at hand; be-think you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. Oh, how have you deceiv'd me! look, here is a basket, if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here, and throw four linnen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or it is whitening time, send him by your two men to *Datchet-mead*.

Mrs. Ford. He's too big to go in there: what shall I do?

Re-enter Falstaff.

Fal. Let me see't, let me see't, O let me see't; I'll in, I'll in; follow your friend's counsel; I'll in.

Mrs. Page. What! Sir *John Falstaff*? are these your letters, Knight?

Fal.

Fal. I love thee, help me away; let me creep in here: I'll never ———

[He goes into the basket, they cover him with foul linnen.]

Mrs. Page. Help to cover your master, boy: call your men, mistress Ford. You dissembling Knight!

Mrs. Ford. What *John*, *Robert*, *John*, go take up these cloaths here, quickly. Where's the cowl staff? look, how you drumble: carry them to the landress in *Datchet-mead*; quickly, come.

Enter Ford, Page, Caius, and Evans.

Ford. Pray you, come near; if I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me, then let me be your jest, I deserve it. How now? whither bear you this?

Serv. To the landress, forsooth.

Mrs. Ford. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You were best meddle with buck-washing.

Ford. Buck? I would I could wash my self of the buck: buck, buck, buck? ay, buck: I warrant you, buck, and of the season too, it shall appear. *[Exeunt. Servants with the basket]* Gentlemen, I have dream'd to night, I'll tell you my dream: here, here, here be my keys; ascend my chambers, search, seek, find out. I'll warrant, we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first. So, now uncape.

Page. Good master Ford, be contented: you wrong your self too much.

Ford. True, master Page. Up, gentlemen, you shall shall see sport anon; follow me, gentlemen.

Eva. This is ferry fantastical humours and jealousies.

Caius. By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France ———

Page. Nay, follow him, gentlemen, see the issue of his search. *[Exeunt.]*

Manent Mistress Page and Mistress Ford.

Mrs. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mrs. Ford. I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceiv'd, or Sir *John*?

Mrs.

Mrs. Page. What a taking was he in, when your husband ask'd who was in the basket?

Mrs. Ford. I am half afraid, he will have need of washing; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest rascal; I would all of the same strain were in the same distress.

Mrs. Ford. I think, my husband hath some special suspicion of *Falstaff's* being here! I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

Mrs. Page. I will lay a plot to try that, and we will yet have more tricks with *Falstaff*: his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion, mistress *Quickly*, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water, and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

Mrs. Page. We'll do it; let him be sent for to morrow by eight a clock, to have amends.

Re-enter Ford, Page, &c.

Ford. I cannot find him; may be, the knave bragg'd of that he could not compass.

Mrs. Page. Heard you that?

Mrs. Ford. I, I; peace: — You use me well, master *Ford*, do you?

Ford. Ay, ay, I do so.

Mrs. Ford. Heav'n make you better than your thoughts!

Ford. Amen.

Mrs. Page. You do your self mighty wrong, Mr. *Ford*.

Ford. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Eva. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heav'n forgive my sins at the day of Judgment.

Casus. By gar, nor I too; there is no bodies.

Page. Fie, fie, Mr. *Ford*, are you not ashamed? what spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha' your distemper in this kind, for the wealth of *Windsor Castle*.

Ford. 'Tis my fault, Mr. *Page*: I suffer for it.

Eva.

Eva. You suffer for a bad conscience; your wife is as honest a woman, as I will desire among five thousand, and five hundred too.

Caius. By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well, I promis'd you a dinner; come, come, walk in the park. I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you, why I have done this. Come, wife; come, mistress *Page*; I pray you, pardon me: pray heartily, pardon me.

Page. Let's go in, gentlemen; but trust me, we'll mock him. I do invite you to morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after we'll a birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

Ford. Any thing.

Eva. If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

Caius. If there be one or two, I shall make a third.

Sir Hugh. In your Teeth, for Shame.

Ford. Pray you go, Mr. *Page*.

Eva. I pray you now, remembrance to morrow on the lousie knave mine Host.

Caius. Dat is good, by gar, with all my heart.

Eva. A lousie knave, to have his gibes, and his mockeries,
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to *Page's House.*

Enter Fenton and Mistress Anne Page.

Fent. I See, I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him sweet
Nan.

Anne. Alas! how then?

Fent. Why, thou must be thy self.
He doth object, I am too great of birth;
And that my state being gall'd with my expence,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies:
And tells me, 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee, but as a property.

N

Anne. May be, he tells y ou true.

Fent. No, heav'n so speed me in my time to come!
 Albeit, I will confess, thy father's wealth
 Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, *Anne* :
 Yet wooing thee, I found thee of more value
 Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags ;
 And 'tis the very riches of thy self
 That now I aim at.

Anne. Gentle Mr. *Fenton*,
 Yet seek my father's love : still seek it, Sir ;
 If opportunity and humblest suit (19)
 Cannot attain it, why then—— hark you hither.
 [*Fenton and Mrs. Anne go apart.*]

Enter Shallow, Slender, and Mistress Quickly.

Shal. Break their talk, mistress *Quickly* ; my kinsman
 shall speak for himself.

Slen. I'll make a shaft or a bolt on'r. : 'd'slid, 'tis but
 venturing.

Shal. Be not dismay'd.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me : I care not for
 hat, but that I am afraid.

Quic. Hark ye, Mr. *Slender* would speak a word with
 you.

Anne. I come to him.—— This is my father's choice.
 O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults
 Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year !

Quic. And how does good master *Fenton* ? pray you,
 a word with you.

Shal. She's coming ; to her, coz. O boy, thou had'st
 a father !

Slen. I had a father, Mrs. *Anne* ; my uncle can tell
 you good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mrs.

(19) *If opportunity and humblest Suit*] Dr. *Tbirlby* imagines, that
 our Author with more Propriety wrote ;

If Importunity and humblest Suit

I have not ventur'd to disturb the Text, because, tho' an equal Ex-
 actness be not maintain'd in the Expression, it may mean, " If the
 frequent Opportunities you find of soliciting my Father, and your
 Obsequiousness to him, cannot get him over to your Party, &c.

Anne

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 267

Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shal. Mistress *Anne*, my cousin loves you.

Slen. Ay, that I do, as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

Shal. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. Ay, that I will; come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a Squire.

Shal. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne. Good master *Shallow*, let him woo for himself.

Shal. Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that. Good comfort; she calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

Anne. Now, master *Slender*.

Slen. Now, good mistress *Anne*.

Anne. What is your will?

Slen. My Will? od's-heart-lings, that's a pretty jest; indeed, I ne'er made my Will yet, I thank heav'n; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heav'n praise.

Anne. I mean, Mr. *Slender*, what would you wish me.

Slen. Truly, for my own part, I would little or nothing with you; your father and my uncle have made motions; if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! they can tell you how things go, better than I can; you may ask your father; here he comes.

Enter Page, and Mistress Page.

Page. Now, master *Slender*: love him, daughter.

Anne.

— Why how now? what does master *Fenton* here?

You wrong me, Sir, thus still to haunt my house:

I told you, Sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

Fent. Nay, master *Page*, be not impatient.

Mrs. Page. Good Master *Fenton*, come not to my child.

Page. She is no match for you.

Fent. Sir, will you hear me?

Page. No. good master *Fenton*.

268 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Come, master *Shallow* ; come, son *Slender*, in.
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, master *Fenton*.

[*Exeunt Page, Shallow, and Slender.*]

Quic. Speak to mistress *Page*.

Fent. Good mistress *Page*, for that I love your daughter

In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce against all checks, rebukes and manners,
I must advance the colours of my love,
And not retire. Let me have your good will.

Anne. Good mother, do not marry me to yon fool.

Mrs. Page. I mean it not, I seek you a better husband.

Quic. That's my master, master Doctor.

Anne. Alas, I had rather be set quick i' th' earth,
And bowl'd to death with turneps.

Mrs. Page. Come, trouble not your self, good master *Fenton*,

I will not be your friend nor enemy :
My daughter will I question how she loves you,
And as I find her, so am I affected.

'Till then, farewell, Sir ; she must needs go in,
Her father will be angry. [*Ex. Mrs. Page and Anne.*]

Fent. Farewel, gentle mistress ; farewell, *Nan*.

Quic. This is my doing now. Nay, said I, will you
cast away your child on a fool, and a physician ? look on
master *Fenton* : this is my doing.

Fent. I thank thee ; and I pray thee, once to night
Give my sweet *Nan* this ring : there's for thy pains.

[*Exit.*]

Quic. Now heav'n send thee good fortune ! A kind
heart he hath, a woman would run through fire and water
for such a kind heart. But yet, I would my master
had mistress *Anne*, or I would Mr. *Slender* had her ; or,
in sooth, I would Mr. *Fenton* had her. I will do what I
can for them all three, for so I have promis'd ; and I'll be
as good as my word, but speciously for Mr. *Fenton*. Well,
I must of another errand to Sir *John Falstaff* from my
two mistresses ; what a beast am I to slack it ?

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

SCENE changes to the Garter-Inn.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

Fal. **B** *Ardolph*, I say.
Bard. Here, Sir.

Fal. Go fetch me a quart of sack, put a toast in't [*Ex. Bard.*] Have I liv'd to be carry'd in a basket, like a barrow of butchers offal, and to be thrown into the *Thames*? well, if I be serv'd such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river, with as little remorse (20) as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' th' litter; and you may know, by my size, that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking: if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should drown. I had been drown'd, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow; a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man: and what a thing should I have been, when I had been swell'd? I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Enter Bardolph.

Now, is the sack brew'd?

Bard. Here's Mrs. *Quickly*, Sir, to speak with you.

Fal. Come, let me pour in some sack to the *Thames*-water; for my belly is as cold as if I had swallow'd snowballs, for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.

Bard. Come in, woman.

(20) *As they would have drown'd a blind bitch's puppies,*] I have ventur'd to transpose the Adjective here, against the Authority of the printed Copies. I know, in Horses, a Colt from a blind Stallion loses much of the Value it might otherwise have; but are puppies ever drown'd the sooner, for coming from a blind Bitch? Two other Passages in our Author countenance the Transposition I have made.

Launce, in 2 *Gent. of Verona*.

----- One that I sav'd from drowning, when three or four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it.

And, *Jago*, in *Othello*:

Come, be a Man; drown thy self? drown Cats and blind Puppies.

Enter Mistress Quickly.

Quic. By your leave: I cry you mercy. Give your worship good morrow.

Fal. Take away these challices: go brew me a pottle of sack finely.

Bard. With eggs, Sir?

Fal. Simple of it self: I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage. How now?

Quic. Marry, Sir, I come to your worship from mistress Ford.

Fal. Mistress Ford? I have had Ford enough; I was thrown into the Ford; I have my belly full of Ford.

Quic. Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

Fal. So did I mine, to build on a foolish woman's promise.

Quic. Well, she laments, Sir, for it, that it would yern your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine. I must carry her word quickly; she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

Fal. Well, I will visit her; tell her so, and bid her think, what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Quic. I will tell her.

Fal. Do so. Between nine and ten, say'st thou?

Quic. Eight and nine, Sir.

Fal. Well, be gone; I will not miss her.

Quic. Peace be with you, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

Fal. I marvel, I hear not of master Brook: he sent me word to stay within: I like his money well, Oh, here he comes.

Enter Ford.

Ford. Bless you, Sir.

Fal. Now, master Brook, you come to know what hath pass'd between me and Ford's wife.

Ford. That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

Fal.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 271

Fal. Master *Brook*, I will not lie to you; I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

Ford. And you sped; Sir?

Fal. Very ill-favour'dly, master *Brook*.

Ford. How, Sir, did she change her determination?

Fal. No, master *Brook*; but the peaking cornuto her husband, master *Brook*, dwelling in a continual larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter; after we had embrac'd, kiss'd, protested, and as it were spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provok'd and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

Ford. What, while you were there?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he search for you, and could not find you?

Fal. You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one mistress *Page*, gives intelligence of *Ford*'s approach, and by her invention and *Ford*'s wife's distraction, they convey'd me into a buck-basket.

Ford. A Buck-basket?

Fal. Yea, a buck-basket; ramm'd me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy napkins; that, master *Brook*, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell, that ever offended nostril.

Ford. And how long lay you there?

Fal. Nay, you shall hear, master *Brook*, what I have suffer'd, to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus cram'd in the basket, a couple of *Ford*'s knaves, his hinds, were call'd forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul cloaths to *Datchet-lane*; they took me on their shoulders, met the jealous knave their master in the door, who ask'd them once or twice what they had in their basket; I quak'd for fear, lest the lunatick knave would have search'd it; but fate ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, on went he for a search, and away went I for foul cloaths; but mark the sequel, master *Brook*; I suffer'd the pangs of three egregious deaths: first, an intolerable fright, to be detected by a jealous rotten bell-weather; next to be compass'd

M 4

like

272 *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck; hilt to point, heel to head; and then to be stopt in, like a strong distillation, with stinking cloaths that fretted in their own grease; think of that, a man of my kidney; think of that, that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw; 'twas a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stew'd in grease, like a *Dutch* dish, to be thrown into the *Thames*, and cool'd glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse shoe; think of that; hissing hot; think of that, master *Brook*.

Ford. In good 'sadness, Sir, I am sorry that for my sake you suffer'd all this. My suit is then desperate; you'll undertake her no more?

Fal. Master *Brook*, I will be thrown into *Etna*, as I have been into *Thames*, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a birthing; I have receiv'd from her another embassie of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, master *Brook*.

Ford. 'Tis past eight already, Sir.

Fal. Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crown'd with your enjoying her; adieu, you shall have her, master *Brook*; master *Brook*, you shall cuckold *Ford*. [Exit.

Ford. Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? master *Ford*, awake; awake, master *Ford*; there's a hole made in your best coat, master *Ford*; this 'tis to be married? this 'tis to have linnen and buck-baskets! well, I will proclaim my self what I am; I will now take the leacher; he is at my house; he cannot 'scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a half-penny purse, nor into a pepper-box. But, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places; tho' what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame: if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me, I'll be horn-mad. [Exit.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE, *Page's house.*

Enter Mistress Page, Mistress Quickly and William

Mrs. PAGE.

IS he at Mr. Ford's already, think'st thou?

Quick. Sure he is by this or will be presently; but truly he is very courageous mad, about his throwing into the water, Mrs. Ford desires you to come suddenly.

Mrs. Page. I'll be with her by and by: I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes; 'tis a playing-day, I see. How now, Sir Hugh, no school to day?

Enter Evans.

Eva. No; master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

Quic. Blessing of his heart.

Mrs. Page. Sir Hugh, my husband says, my son profits nothing in the world at his book; I pray you ask him some questions in his *Accidence*.

Eva. Come hither, *William*; hold up your head, come.

Mrs. Page. Come on Sirrah, hold up your head; answer your master, be not afraid.

Eva. *William*, how many numbers is in nouns?

Will. Two.

Quic. Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say, *od's nouns*.

Eva. Peace your tatlings. What is, *Fair, William*?

Will. *Fulcher*.

Quic. *Poulcats*? there are fairer things than *poulcats*, sure.

Eva. You are a very simplicity o'man; I pray you, peace. What is, *Lapis, William*?

N 5

Will

274 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Will. A stone.

Eva. And what is a stone, *William*?

Will. A pebble.

Eva. No, it is *Lapis*: I pray you, remember in your prain.

Will. *Lapis*.

Eva. That is a good *William*: what is he, *William*, that does lend articles?

Will. Articles are borrow'd of the pronoun, and be thus declin'd, *singulariter nominativo, hic, hac, hoc*.

Eva. *Nominativo, hic, hac, hoc*; pray you mark: *genitivo, hujus*: well, what is your *accusative case*?

Will. *Accusative, hinc*.

Eva. I pray you, have your remembrance, child; *accusative, hunc, hanc, hoc*.

Quic. Hang hog is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

Eva. Leave your prabbles, o'man. What is the *focative case, William*?

Will. O, *vocativo, O*.

Eva. Remember, *William*, *focative* is *caret*.

Quic. And that's a good root.

Eva. O'man forbear.

Mrs. Page. Peace.

Eva. What is your *genitive case plural, William*?

Will. *Genitive case*?

Eva. Ay.

Will. *Genitive, horum, harum, horum*.

Quic. Vengeance of *Ginyes case*; fie on her; never name her, child if she be a whore.

Eva. For shame, o'man.

Quick. You do ill to teach the child such words: he teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast enough of themselves; and to call *horum*; fie upon you!

Eva. O'man, art thou lunacies? hast thou no understandings for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? thou art as foolish christian creatures, as I would desire.

Mrs. Page. Pr'ythee, hold thy peace.

Eva. Shew me now, *William*, some declensions of your pronouns.

Will.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 275

Will. Forsooth, I have forgot.

Eva. It is *qui, quæ, quod*; if you forget your *quies*, your *quas*, and your *quods*, you must be preeches: go your ways and play, go.

Mrs. Page. He is a better scholar, than I thought he was.

Eva. He is a good sprag memory. Farewel, Mrs. Page

Mrs. Page. Adieu, good Sir *Hugh*. Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to Ford's house.

Enter Falstaff and Mistress Ford.

Fal. **M**ISTRESS *Ford*, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance; I see you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, mistress *Ford*, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

Mrs. Ford. He's a birding, sweet Sir *John*.

Mrs. Page. [within.] What ho, gossip *Ford*! what ho!

Mrs. Ford. Step into th' chamber, Sir *John*.

[Exit Falstaff.]

Enter Mistress Page.

Mrs. Page. How now, sweet heart, who's at home besides your self?

Mrs. Ford. Why none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page. Indeed?

Mrs. Ford. No, certainly—Speak louder. [Aside.]

Mrs. Page. Truly, I am so glad you have no body here.

Mrs. Ford. Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lues again; he so takes on yonder with my husband, so rails against all married mankind, so curses all *Eve's* daughters, of what complexion soever, and so buffers himself

276 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

himself on the fore-head, crying, *peer-out, peer-out!* that any madness I ever yet beheld seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is in now ; I am glad the fat Knight is not here.

Mrs. Ford. Why, does he talk of him?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him; and swears, he was carry'd out, the last time he search'd for him, in a basket; protests to my husband, he is now here; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion; but I am glad the Knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford. How near is he, mistress Page?

Mrs. Page. Hard by, at street's end, he will be here anon.

Mrs. Ford. I am undone, the Knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why, then thou art utterly sham'd, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you? away with him, away with him; better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford. Which way should he go? how should I bestow him? shall I put him into the basket again?

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. No, I'll come no more i'th' basket: may I not go out, ere he come?

Mrs. Page. Alas! alas! three of master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none should issue out, otherwise you might slip away ere he came: but what make you here?

Fal. What shall I do. I'll creep up into the chimney.

Mrs. Ford. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces; creep into the kill-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word: neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note; there is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. I'll go out then.

Mr.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 277

Mr. Ford.. It you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir John, unless you go out disguis'd. How might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the-day, I know not; there is no woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise, he might put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

Fal. Good heart, devise something; any extremity, rather than mischief.

Mrs. Ford. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brainford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page. On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is, and there's her thrumb hat, and her muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

Mrs. Ford. Go, go, sweet Sir John; mistress Page and I will look some linnen for your head.

Mrs. Page. Quick, quick, we'll come dress you straight; put on the gown the while. [Ex. Falstaff.]

Mrs. Ford. I would my husband would meet him in this shape; he cannot abide the old woman of Brainford; he swears, she's a witch, forbad her my house, and hath threatned to beat her.

Mrs. Page. Heav'n guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

Mrs. Ford. But is my husband coming?

Mrs. Page. Ay, in good sadness is he; and talks of the basket too, however he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

Mrs. Page. Nay, but he'll be here presently; let's go dress him like the witch of Brainford.

Mrs. Ford. I'll first direct my men, what they shall do with the basket; go up, I'll bring linnen for him straight.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest varlet, we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,

Wives may be merry and yet honest too.

We do not act, that often jest and laugh:

'Tis old but true, Still swine eats all the draugh.

Mrs.

278. *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Mrs. Ford. Go, Sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders; your master is hard at door, if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, dispatch.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford.*]

Enter Servants with the basket.

1 *Serv.* Come, come, take up.

2 *Serv.* Pray heav'n, it be not full of the Knight again.

1 *Serv.* I hope not. I had as lief bear so much lead.

Enter Ford, Shallow, Page, Cains and Evans.

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again: set down the basket, villain; somebody call my wife: youth in a basket! oh you panderly rascals, there's a knot, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy, against me: now shall the devil be sham'd. What! wife, I say; come, come forth, behold what honest cloaths you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why, this passes, master Ford,——you are not to go loose any longer, you must be pinnion'd

Eva. Why, this is lunaticks; this is mad as a mad dog.

Enter Mrs. Ford.

Shal. Indeed, master Ford, this is not well indeed.

Ford. So say I too, Sir. Come hither, mistress Ford; mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

Mrs. Ford. Heav'n be my witness you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford. Well said, brazen-face; hold it out: come forth, Sirrah.

[*Pulls the cloaths out of the basket.*]

Page. This passes,——

Mrs. Ford. Are you not ashamed, let the cloaths alone.

Ford. I shall find you anon.

Eva.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 279

Eva. 'Tis unreasonable; will you take up your wife's cloaths? come away.

Ford. Empty the Basket, I say.

Mrs. Ford, Why, man, why?

Ford. Master *Page*, as I am a man, there was one convey'd out of my house yesterday in this basket; why may not he be there again? in my house I am sure he is; my intelligence is true, my jealousy is reasonable; pluck me out all the linnen.

Mrs. Ford. If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

Page. Here's no man.

Shal. By my fidelity, this is not well, master *Ford*; this wrongs you.

Eva. Master *Ford*, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart; this is jealousies.

Ford. Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page. No, nor no where else but in your brain.

Ford. Help to search my house this one time; if I find not what I seek, shew no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me, as jealous as *Ford*, that searched a hollow wall-nut for his wife's leman. Satisfie me once more, once more search with me.

Mrs. Ford. What hoa, mistress *Page*! come you, and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

Ford. Old woman! what old woman's that?

Mrs. Ford. Why, it is my maid's aunt of *Brainford*.

Ford. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean; have I not forbid her my house? she comes of errands, does she? we are simple men, we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by th' figure; and such dawbry as this is beyond our element; we know nothing. Come down, you witch; you hag you, come down, I say.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, good sweet husband; good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Enter Falstaff in womens cloaths, and Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Page. Come, mother *Prat*, come, give me your hand.

Ford.

80 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Ford. I'll *Prat* her. Out of my door, you witch!
[*Beats him.*] you hag, you baggage, you poulcat, you
runnion! out, out, out; I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-
tell you. [Exit *Fal.*

Mrs. Page. Are you not ashamed? I think, you have
kill'd the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, he will do it; 'tis a goodly credit
for you.

Ford. Hang her, witch.

Eva. By yea and no; I think, the o'man is a witch
indeed: I like not, when a o'man has a great peard; I
spy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, fol-
low; see but the issue of my jealousy; (21) if I cry out
thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again.

Page. Let's obey his humour a little further; come,
gentlemen. [Exit.

Mrs. Page. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, by th' mass, that he did not; he beat
him most unpitifully, methought.

Mrs. Page. I'll have the cudgel hallow'd and hung o'er
the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

Mrs. Ford. What think you? may we, with the war-
rant of woman-hood, and the witness of a good conscience,
pursue him with any further revenge?

Mrs. Page. The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scar'd
out of him; if the devil have him not in fee-simple,
with fine and recovery, he will never I think, in the way
of waste, attempt us again.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we tell our husbands how we have
served him?

Mrs. Page. Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape
the figures out of your husband's brain. If they can find

(21) *If I cry out thus upon no tryal, never trust me when I open
again.* This is a Corruption of the modern Editions: the Confe-
quence either of Indolence, or Ignorance. The two first *Folio's* have
it rightly, *trayle*; which is a hunting-term, and corresponds with
cry out, and open.

Our Author uses the Word again twice in his *Hamlet*.

*Or else this Brain of mine hunts not the Trayle of Policy, &c.
How chearfully on the false trayle they cry!*

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 281

in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat Knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

Mrs. Ford. I'll warrant, they'll have him publickly sham'd; and, methinks, there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publickly sham'd.

Mrs. Page. Come to the forge with it, then shape it: I would not have things cool. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to the Garter-Inn.

Enter Host and Bardolph.

Bard. SIR, the German desires to have three of your horses; the Duke himself will be to morrow at Court, and they are going to meet him.

Host. What Duke should that be, comes so secretly? I hear not of him in the Court: let me speak with the gentlemen; they speak *English*?

Bard. Sir, I'll call them to you.

Host. They shall have my horses, but I'll make them pay, I'll sawce them. They have had my house a week at command; I have turn'd away my other guests; (22) they must compt off; I'll sawce them, come. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to Ford's house.

Enter Page, Ford, Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, and Evans.

Eva. THIS one of the best discretions of a o'man, as ever I did look upon.

Page. And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

(22) ---they must come off.] This can never be our Poet's, or his Host's Meaning: to come off, is, in other Terms, to go *scot free*; But these Germans had taken up the Host's house, and he was resolv'd to make them pay for it. We must, certainly therefore, read, *they must compt off*: i. e. they must pay off the Accompt, or, as we now say, down with their Pence.

Mr. Warburton.

Mrs.

282 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Mrs. Page. Within a quarter of an hour.

Ford. Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt ;

I rather will suspect the sun with cold,
Than thee with wantonnels ; thy honour stands,
In him that was of late an heretick,
As firm of faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well ; no more.

Be not as extream in submission, as in offence ;
But let our plot go forward : let our wives
Yet once again, to make us publick sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way than That they spoke of.

Page. How ? to send him word they'll meet him in the Park at midnight ? fie, fie, he'll never come.

Eva. You say, he hath been thrown into the river ; and has been grievously peaten, as an old o'man ; methinks, there should be terrors in him, that he should not come ; methinks, his flesh is punish'd, he shall have no desires.

Page. So think I too.

Mrs. Ford. Devise but how you'll use him, when he comes ;

And let us two devise to bring him thither.

Mrs. Page. There is an old tale goes, that *Herne* the hunter,

Sometime a keeper here in *Windsor* forest,
Doth all the winter time at still of midnight
Walk round about an oak ; with ragged horns ;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattel ;
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner.

You've heard of such a Spirit ; and well you know,
The superstitious idle-headed *Eld*.

Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of *Herne* the hunter for a truth.

Page. Why yet there want not many, that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this *Herne's* Oak ;
But what of this ?

Mrs.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 283

Mrs. Ford. Marry this is our device, (23)
That *Falstaff* at that oak shall meet with us.
We'll send him word to meet us in the Field,
Disguis'd like *Herne*, with huge Horns on his Head.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted, but he'll come.
And in this shape when you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? what is your Plot?

Mrs. Page. That likewise we have thought upon,
and thus:

Nan Page, (my daughter) and my little son,
And three or four more of their growth, we'll dress
Like urchins, onphes, and fairies green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands; upon a sudden,
As *Falstaff*, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a saw-pit rush at once
With some diffused song: upon their sight,
We two, in great amazedness, will fly;
Then let them all encircle him about,
And fairy-like to pinch the unclean Knight;
And ask him why, that hour of fairy Revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape prophane?

Mrs. Ford. And 'till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him round,
And burn him with their tapers.

Mrs. Page. The truth being known,
We'll all present our selves; dis-horn the Spirit,
And mock him home to *Windsor*.

Ford. The Children must
Be practis'd well to this, or they'll ne'er do't.

(23) *Mrs. Ford, Marry, this is our device,*

That Falstaff at that Oak shall meet with us.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted, but he'll come.

And in this Shape when you have brought him thither.] Thus this
Passage has been transmitted down to us, from the Time of the first
Edition by the Players: But what was this Shape, in which *Falstaff*
was to be appointed to meet? For the women have not said one
Word to ascertain it. This makes it more than suspicious, the Defect
in this Point must be owing to some wise Retrenchment. The two
intermediate Lines, which I have restor'd from the old *Quarto*, are
absolutely necessary, and clear up the matter.

Eoa.

284 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Eva. I will teach the children their behaviours; and I will be like a jack-anapes also, to burn the Knight with my Taper.

Ford. This will be excellent. I'll go buy them vizards.

Mrs. Page. My *Nan* shall be the Queen of all the fairies; Finely attir'd in a robe of white.

Page. That silk will I go buy, and in that time (24) Shall Mr. *Slender* steal my *Nan* away, [Aside.

And marry her at *Eaton*. Go, send to *Falstaff* straight.

Ford. Nay, I'll to him again in the name of *Brook*; he'll tell me all his Purpose. Sure, he'll come.

Mrs. Page. Fear not you that; go get us Properties and Tricking for our Fairies.

Eva. Let us about it, it is admirable pleasures, and ferry honest knaveries. [Ex. *Page, Ford and Evans.*

Mrs. Page. Go, Mrs *Ford*. Send Quickly to Sir *John*, to know his mind. (25)

[Exit. *Mrs. Ford.*

I'll to the Doctor; he hath my good will,

And none but he, to marry with *Nan Page*.

That *Slender*, tho' well landed, is an Ideot:

And he my husband best of all affects;

The Doctor is well mony'd, and his friends

Potent at Court; he, none but he shall have her;

Tho' twenty thousand worthier came to crave her.

[Exit,

(24) *That Silk will I go buy, and in that time*

Shall Mr. Slender steal, &c.] What! must *Slender* steal Mrs. *Anne* while her Father goes to buy the Silk she was to be dress'd in? This was no part of the Scheme. Her Garb was to be the Signal for *Slender* to know her by. The Alteration of a single Letter gives us the Poet's Reading. *Tire* is as common with our Poet, and other Writers of his Age, as *Attire*; to signify, *Dress*. And my Emendation is clearly justified, by what *Fenton* afterwards tells the Host.

Her Father means She shall be all in white,

And in that Dress, when Slender sees his time

To take her by the Hand, &c.

(25) *Send quickly to Sir John, to know his mind*] The whole Set of printed Copies downwards have sunk our *Messenger* here into an *Adverb*. Dame *Quickly* is the Person intended to be sent to Sir *John*; and accordingly when we next find her with him, She tells him, *She comes from the two parties; viz. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to the Garter-Inn.*

Enter Host and Simple.

Host. **W**HAT would'st thou have, boor? what, thick-skin? speak, breathe, discuss, brief, short, quick, snap.

Simp. Marry, Sir, I come to speak with Sir *John Falstaff*, from Mr. *Slender*.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new; go, knock and call; he'll speak like an anthropophaginian unto thee: knock, I say.

Simp. There's an old woman, a fat woman gone up into his chamber; I'll be so bold as stay, Sir, till she come down; I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host. Ha! a fat woman? the Knight may be robb'd: I'll call. Bully-Knight! bully-Sir *John*! speak from thy lungs military: art thou there? It is thine *Host*, thine *Ephefian* calls.

Falstaff above.

Fal. How now, mine *Host*?

Host. Here's a *Bokemian-Tartar* carries the coming down of thy fat woman: let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourable. Fie, privacy? fie!

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. There was mine host, an old fat woman even now with me, but she's gone.

Simp. Pray you, Sir, was't not the wise woman of *Brainford*?

Fal. Ay, marry was it, mussel-shell, what would you with her?

Simp. My master, Sir, my master *Slender* sent to her, seeing her go thro' the street, to know, Sir, whether one *Nym*, Sir, that beguil'd him of a chain, had the chain, or no.

Fal.

286 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

Simp. And what says she, I pray, Sir?

Fal. Marry, she says, that the very same man, that beguil'd master *Slender* of his chain, cozen'd him of it.

Simp. I would, I could have spoken with the woman her self; I had other things to have spoken with her too, from him,

Fal. What are they? let us know.

Hof. Ay, come; quick.

Simp. I may not conceal them, Sir.

Fal. Conceal them, or thou dy'st.

Simp. Why, Sir, they were nothing but about mistress *Anne Page*; to know, if it were my master's fortune to have her, or no.

Fal. 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

Simp. What, Sir?

Fal. To have her, or no: go; say, the woman told me so.

Simp. May I be so bold to say so, Sir?

Fal. Ay, Sir; like whomore bold.

Simp. I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad with these Tidings. [Exit Simple.

Hof. Thou art clarkly; thou art clarkly, Sir *John*: was there a wise woman with thee?

Fal. Ay, that there was, mine *Hof.*, one, that hath taught me more wit than ever I learn'd before in my life; and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

Enter Bardolph.

Bard. Out, alas, Sir, cozenage! meer cozenage!

Hof. Where be my horses? speak well of them, varletto.

Bard. Run away with the cozeners; for so soon as I came beyond *Eaton*, they threw me off from behind one of them in a slough of mire, and set spurs, and away; like three *German* devils, three *Doctor Faustus's*.

Hof. They are gone but to meet the Duke, villain; do not say they be fled, *Germans* are honest men.

Enter

Enter Evans.

Eva. Where is mine host?

Host. What is the matter, Sir?

Eva. Have a care of your entertainments; there is a friend o'mine come to town, tells me, there is three cozen-jermans that has cozen'd all the Hosts of *Readings*, of *Maiden-head*, of *Colebrook*, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you; you are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozen'd; fare you well. [*Exit.*]

Enter Caius.

Caius. Ver' is mine Host de *Yarteer*?

Host. Here, master Doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

Caius. I cannot tell vat is dat; but it is tell-a-me, dat you make a grand Preparation for a Duke de *Yamany*; by my trot, der is no Duke, dat the Court is know, to come: I tell you for good will; adieu. [*Ex.*]

Host. Hue and cry, villain, go! assist me Knight, I am undone, fly, run, hue and cry! Villain, I am undone! [*Ex.*]

Fal. I would, all the world might be cozen'd, for I have been cozen'd and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the Court, how I have been transformed, and how my Transformation hath been wash'd and cudgel'd, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermens boots with me. I warrant, they would whip me with their fine wits, 'till I were as crest-faln as a dry'd pear. I never prosper'd since I forswore myself at *Primero*. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.——

Enter Mrs. Quickly.

Now, whence come you?

Quic. From the two parties, forsooth.

Fal.

Fal. The devil take one party, and his dam the other, and so they shall be both bestow'd. I have suffer'd more for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

Quic. And have not they suffer'd? yes, I warrant, speciously one of them; mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

Fal. What tell'st thou me of black and blue? I was beaten my self into all the colours of the rain-bow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brainford; but that my admirable dexterity of wit, counterfeiting the (26) action of a wood woman, deliver'd me, the knave constable had set me i'th' stocks, i'th' common stocks for a witch.

Quic. Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber; you shall hear how things go, and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado is here to bring you together? sure, one of you does not serve heav'n well, that you are so cross'd.

Fal. Come up into my chamber.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Fenton and Host.

Host. Master Fenton, talk not to me, my mind is heavy I will give over all.

Fent. Yet hear me speak; assist me in my purpose, And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee An hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

[26] *Action of an old Woman,*] This Reading is no great Compliment to the Sagacity of our former Editors, who could content themselves with Words, without any regard to the Reasoning. What! was it any Dexterity of Wit in Sir *John Falstaff*, to counterfeited the Action of an *Old Woman* in order to escape being apprehended for a *Witch*? Surely, one would imagine, This was the readiest means to bring him into such a Scrape: for none but *old Women* have ever been suspected of being *Witches*. The Text must certainly be restor'd, as I have corrected it, a *wood Woman*; i. e. a crazy, frantick Woman; one too wild, and silly, and unmeaning, to have either the Malice, or mischievous Subtlety of a *Witch* in her. I have already explain'd, and prov'd the use of this Term, in one of my Notes on the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

Host.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 289

Hof. I will hear you, master *Penton*; and I will, at the least, keep your counsel.

Fent. From time to time I have acquainted you With the dear love I bear to fair *Anne Page*; Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection, (So far forth as her self might be her chuser) Ev'n to my wish. I have a letter from her Of such contents, as you will wonder at; The mirth whereof's so larded with my matter, That neither singly can be manifested, Without the shew of both. For Sir *John Falstaff* Hath a great Scene; the image of the jest I'll shew you here at large. Hark, good mine *Hof*; To night at *Herne's Oak*, just 'twixt twelve and one, Must my sweet *Nan* present the fairy Queen; The purpose why, is here: in which disguise, While other jests are something rank on foot, Her father hath commanded her to slip Away with *Slender*, and with him at *Eaton* Immediately to marry; she hath consented.—Now, Sir, Her mother, ever strong against that match, And firm for Doctor *Cains*, hath appointed That he shall likewise shuffle her away, While other sports are tasking of their minds; And at the Deanry, where a priest attends, Straight marry her; To this her Mother's Plot She, seemingly obedient, likewise hath Made promise to the Doctor.—Now, thus it rests; Her father means she shall be all in white, And in that dress when *Slender* sees his time To take her by the hand, and bid her go, She shall go with him—Her mother hath intended, The better to devote her to the Doctor, (For they must all be mask'd and vizarded) That, quaint in green, she shall be loose enrob'd, With ribbands-pendent, flaring 'bout her head; And when the Doctor spies his vantage ripe, To pinch her by the hand, and on that token, The maid hath given consent to go with him.

Hof. Which means she to deceive? father or mother?

Fent.

290 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Fent. Both, my good Host, to go along with me;
And here it rests, that you'll procure the Vicar
To stay for me at church, 'twixt twelve and one,
And in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host. Well, husband your device; I'll to the Vicar.
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

Fent. So shall I evermore be bound to thee;
Beside, I'll make a present-recompence. [Exeunt.]

Re-enter Falstaff and Mistress Quickly.

Fal. Pr'ythee, no more prating; go, I'll hold. This
is the third time; I hope, good luck lyes in odd num-
bers, away, go; they say, there is divinity in odd
numbers, either in nativity, chance or death; away.

Quic. I'll provide you a chain, and I'll do what I can
to get you a pair of horns. [Exit Mrs. Quickly.]

Fal. Away, I say, time wears: hold up your head
and mince.

Enter Ford.

How now, master Brook? master Brook, the matter
will be known to night, or never. Be you in the Park
about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see won-
ders.

Ford. Went you not to her yesterday, Sir, as you told
me you had appointed?

Fal. I went to her, master Brook, as you see, like a
poor old man; but I came from her, master Brook,
like a poor old woman. That same knave, Ford her
husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him,
master Brook, that ever govern'd frenzy. I will tell
you; he beat me grievously, in the shape of a wo-
man; for in the shape of a man, master Brook, I fear
not Goliath with a weaver's beam; because I know also,
life is a shuttle; I am in haste; go along with me,
I'll tell you all, master Brook. Since I pluckt geese,
play'd truant, and whipt top, I knew not what 'twas
to be beaten, 'till lately. Follow me, I'll tell you
strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to night
I will

I will be reveng'd, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow; strange things in hand, master Brook & follow. ————— [Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE, Windsor-Park.

Enter Page, Shallow, and Slender.

PAGE.

COME, come; we'll couch i'th' castle ditch, till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son *Slender*, my daughter.

Slend. Ay, forsooth, I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry, *mum*; she cries, *budget*; and by that we know one another.

Shal. That's good too; but what needs either your *mum*, or her *budget*? the white will decipher her well enough. It hath struck ten o'clock.

Page. The night is dark, light and spirits will become it well; heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away; follow me. [Exeunt.]

Enter Mistress Page, Mistress Ford and Caius.

Mrs. Page. Mr. Doctor, my daughter is in green; when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the Deanary, and dispatch it quickly; go before into the Park; we two must go together.

Caius. I know vat I have to doe adieu. [Exit.]

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, Sir. My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of *Falstaff*, as he will chafe at the Doctor's marrying my daughter; but it's no matter; better a little chiding, than a great deal of heart-break.

292 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Mrs. Ford. Where is *Nan* now, and her troop of fairies, (27) and the *Welch* devil *Evans*?

Mrs. Page. They are all couch'd in a pit hard by *Herne's* oak, with obscur'd lights; which, at the very instant of *Falstaff's* and our Meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mrs. Ford. That cannot chuse but amaze him.

Mrs. Page. If he be not amaz'd, he will be mock'd; if he be amaz'd, he will every way be mock'd.

Mrs. Ford. We'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page. Against such lewdsters, and their lechery, Those, that betray them, do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford. The hour draws on; to the oak, to the oak.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Evans and Fairies.

Eva. Trib, trib, fairies; come, and remember your parts: be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the Watch'ords, do as I bid you: come, come; trib, trib.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Falstaff, with a Buck's head on.

Fal. The *Windsor* bell hath struck twelve, the minute draws on; now the hot-blooded Gods assist me! Remember, *Jove*, thou wast a bull for thy *Europa*; love set on thy horns. Oh powerful love! that, in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other, a man a beast: You were also, *Jupiter*, a swan, for the love of *Leda*: oh, omnipotent love! how near the God drew to the complexion of a goose? A fault done first in the form of a beast, — O *Jove*, a beastly fault; and then another fault in the semblance of a fowl: —

(27) *And the Welch Devil Herne?*] Thus all the Impressions have blunder'd after each other; but *Falstaff* was to represent *Herne*, and he was no *Welchman*. Where was the Attention, or Sagacity, of our Editors, not to observe that Mrs. Ford is inquiring for *Evans* by the Name of the *Welch* Devil? The Mistake, of the Word *Herne* getting into the Text, might easily happen by the Inadvertence of Transcribers, who threw their Eyes too hastily on the succeeding Line, where the Word again occurs. Dr. *Thirlby* likewise discover'd the Blunder of this Passage.

think

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 293

think on't, *Jove*, a foul fault. When gods have hot backs, what shall poor men do? for me, I am here a *Windsor* stag, and the fattest, I think, i' th' forest. Send me a cool rut-time, *Jove*, or who can blame me to piss my tallow? who comes here? my Doe?

Enter Mistress Ford and Mistress Page.

Mrs. Ford. Sir *John*? art thou there, my deer, my male deer?

Fal. My doe with the black scut? let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of *Green-Sleeves*; hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

Mrs. Ford. Mistress *Page* is come with me, sweet heart.

Fal. (28) Divide me like a bribe-buck, each a haunch; I will keep my fides to my self, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like *Herne* the hunter? why, now is *Cupid* a child of conscience, he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

[*Noise within.*]

Mrs. Page. Alas! what noise?

Mrs. Ford. Heav'n forgive our sins!

Fal. What should this be?

Mrs. Ford. *Mrs. Page.* Away, away.

[*The women run out.*]

Fal. I think, the devil will not have me damn'd, lest the oil that is in me should set hell on fire; he never would else cross me thus.

Enter Sir Hugh like a Satyr; Quickly, and others, dressed like Fairies, with Tapets.

Quic. Fairies, black, gray, green and white,

(28) *Divide me like a brib'd-Buck,*] Thus all the old Copies, mistakingly: It must be, *bribe-buck*; i. e. a Buck sent for a Bribe. I made the Correction in my SHAKESPEARE *Reform'd*; and Mr. Pope has reform'd the Passage by it, in his last Edition.

294 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

You moon-shine revellers, and shades of night,
You Ouphen-heirs of fixed destiny, (29)
Attend your office and your quality.

Crier hob-goblin, make the fairy o-yes.

Eva. Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys,
Cricket, to *Windsor* chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unrak'd, and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blew as bilberry.
Our radiant Queen hates fluts and sluttery.

Fal. They're fairies; he, that speaks to them, shall die.
I'll wink and cough; no man their works must eye.

[*Lies down upon his face.*]

Eva. Where's *Pede*? go you, and where you find a
maid,

That, ere she sleep, hath thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy;
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy;
But those, that sleep, and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.

Quic. About, about;

Search *Windsor* castle, elves, within and out.
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room,
That it may stand 'till the perpetual Doom,
In state as wholesom, as in state 'tis fit;
Worthy the owner, as the owner it (30)

(29) *You orphan-heirs of*] Why, *Orphan-heirs*? Destiny, to
which they owed their Original, and to whom they were Heirs, was
yet in *Being* sure: therefore they could not be call'd Orphans. Doubt-
less, the Poet wrote;

You Ouphen-heirs of fixed Destiny.

i. e. You *Elves*, that succeed to, and minister in, some of the Works
of Destiny. They are call'd both before and after, in this Play,
Oupps; here *Ouphen*: for *en* is either the Saxon Termination of plural
Nouns; (the Word it self being from the Saxon ALPENNE, *lamia*,
daemones;) or the Termination of an Adjective, form'd from a Noun;
as *wooden*, *woollen*, *golden*, *bracen*, &c.

Mr. Warburton,

(30) - - - and the Owner it.] And cannot be the true Read-
ing, both because the Grammar of the Sentence will not allow it, and
his Court to Queen *Elizabeth* directs to another Reading;

- - - as the Owner it.

for, sure, he would not wish a Thing, which his Complaisance and
Address must suppose actually was; viz, the Worth of the Owner.

Mr. Warburton.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 295

The several chairs of Order look you scour,
With juice of balm and ev'ry precious flow'r ;
Each fair Instalment Coat and sev'ral Crest,
With loyal blazon evermore be blest !
And nightly-meadow-fairies, look, you sing,
Like to the *Garter*-compass, in a ring :
Th'expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see ;
And, *Hony Soit Qui Mal y Pense* write,
In emrol'd ruffs, flow'rs purple, blue and white,
Like saphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair Knight-hood's bending knee ;
Fairies use flow'rs for their charactery.
Away, disperse ; but, 'till 'tis one o' clock ;
Our dance of custom round about the Oak
Of *Herne* the hunter, let us not forget.

3

Eva. Pray you, lock hand in hand, your selves in order set :

And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But stay, I smell a man of middle earth.

Fal. Heav'n's defend me from that *Welsh* fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese !

Eva. Vild worm, thou wast o'er-look'd ev'n in thy birth.

Quic. With tryal-fire touch me his finger-end ;
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend,
And turn him to no pain ; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

Eva. A tryal, come. —

[*They burn him with their sapers, and pinch him.*]

Come, will this wood take fire ?

Fal. Oh, oh, oh !

Quick. Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire ;
About him, fairies, sing a scornful rhyme :
And as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

Eva. (31) It is right, indeed, he is full of lecheries and iniquity.

The

(31) *Eva.* It is right, indeed :] This short Speech, which is very

The S O N G.

*Fie on sinful phantasy :
 Fie on lust and luxury :
 Lust is but a bloody fire,
 Kindled with unchaste desire,
 Fed in heart whose flames aspire,
 As thoughts do blow them higher and higher.
 Pinch him, fairies, mutually ;
 Pinch him for his willany :
 Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
 'Till candles, and star-light, and moon shine be out.*

(32) *During this Song, they pinch him. Doctor Caius comes one way, and steals away a Boy in green ; Slender, another way, and he takes away a Boy in white ; and Fenton comes, and steals away Mrs. Anne Page. A Noise of bunting is made within. All the Fairies run away. Falstaff pulls off his Buck's head ; and rises.*

Enter Page, Ford, &c. They lay hold on him.

Page. Nay, do not fly ; I think, we've watcht you now ;

Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn ?

Mrs. Page. I pray you, come ; hold up the jest no higher.

Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives ?

very much in Character for Sir *Hugh*, I have inserted from the old *Quarto*.

(32) *During this Song,*] This Direction I thought proper to insert from the old *Quarto's*, as it is necessary to explain what is in Action on the Scene ; and on which a Part of the *Catastrophe* of the Fable depends.

See you these, husbands ? do not these fair Yoaks (33)
Become the forest better than the town ?

Ford. Now, Sir, who's a cuckold now ? master *Brook*, *Falstaff's* a knave, a cuckoldly knave, here are his horns, master *Brook* ; and master *Brook*, he hath enjoy'd nothing of *Ford's* but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to master *Brook* ; his horses are arrested for it, master *Brook*.

Mrs. Ford. Sir *John*, we have had ill luck ; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always count you my deer.

Fal. I do begin to perceive, that I am made an ass.

Ford. Ay, and an ox too : both the proofs are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies ? I was three or four times in the thought, they were not fairies ; and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the soppery into a receiv'd belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now, how wit may be made a jack-a-lent, when 'tis upon ill imployment.

Eva. Sir *John Falstaff*, serve got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said, fairy *Hugh*.

Eva. And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

(33) See you these husbands ? Do not these fair Oaks
Become the Forest better than the Town ?] What Oaks, in the Name of Nonsense, do our sagacious Editors make *Mrs. Page* talk of ? The Oaks in the Park ? But there was no Intention of transplanting them into the Town. *Me quidem pudet, pigerque.* The first Folio reads, as the Poet intended, Yoaks : and *Mrs. Page's* Meaning is this. She speaks to her own, and *Mrs. Ford's* Husband, and asks them, if they see the Horns in *Falstaff's* Hand ; and then alluding to them as the Types of Cuckoldom, puts the Question, whether those Yoaks are not more proper in the Forest than in the Town : i. e. than in their Families, as a Reproach to them.

Ford.

298 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Ford. I will never mistrust my wife again, 'till thou art able to woo her in good *English*.

Fal. Have I laid my brain in the sun and dry'd it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this? am I ridden with a *Welch* goat too? shall I have a coxcomb of frize? 'tis time I were choak'd with a piece of toasted cheese.

Eva. Seefe is not good to give putter; your pelly is all putter.

Fal. Seefe and putter? have I liv'd to stand in the taunt of one, that makes fritters of *English*? this is enough to be the decay of lust and lare-walking, through the Realm.

Mrs. Page. Why, Sir *John*, do you think though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, and have given our selves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Ford. What a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax? (34)

Mrs. Page. A puffed man?

Page. Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails?

Ford. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page. And as poor as *Job*?

Ford. And as wicked as his wife?

Eva. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sacks and wines, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings, and stairings, pribbles and prabbles?

Fal. Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the *Welch* flannel; ignorance it self is a plummet o'er me; use me as you will.

Ford. Marry, Sir, we'll bring you to *Windsor*, to one *Mr. Brook*, that you have cozen'd of money, to whom

(34) *What, a hog's pudding?* Mr. Pope has help'd us to this *hog's pudding*; all the other Editions, which I have seen, have it rightly *bodge-pudding*, as it is vulgarly written and pronounc'd; the *French* call, to shake or, jumble together, *bocher*: and they have a Dish call'd, *un bocbe-pot*, which is a Mixture of several Sorts of Meats cook'd up together. They likewise call it, *un pot pourri*: (says *Richalet*) a Dish, made up of several Meats macerated: and such a *Gallimaufry*, does *Ford* mean, is *Falstaff*.

you

you should have been a pander : over and above that you have suffer'd, I think, to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

(35) *Mrs. Ford.* Nay, husband, let That go to make amends :

Forgive that Sum, and so we'll all be Friends.

Ford. Well, here's my hand ; all's forgiven at last.

Page. Yet be cheerful, Knight ; thou shalt eat a posset to night at my house, where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her, Mr. *Slender* hath marry'd her daughter.

Mrs. Page. Doctors doubt that ; if *Anne Page* be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor *Caius's* wife. [*Aside.*]

Enter Slender.

Slen. What hoe ! hoe ! father *Page* ?

Page. Son, how new ? how now, son, have you dispatch'd ?

Slen. Dispatch'd ? I'll make the best in *Gloucestershire* know on't ; would I were hang'd la, else.

Page. Of what, son ?

Slen. I came yonder at *Eaton* to marry mistress *Anne Page*, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i'th' church, I would have swing'd him, or he should have swing'd me. If I did not think it had been *Anne Page*, would I might never stir, and 'tis a post-master's-boy.

Page. Upon my life, then you took the wrong.

Slen. What need you tell me that ? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl : if I had been marry'd to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

(35) *Mrs. Ford. Nay, husband,*] This and the following little Speech I have inserted from the old *Quarto's*. The Retrenchment, I presume, was by the Players ; and an injudicious One, in my Opinion. Sir *John Falstaff* is design'd the Favourite Character in the Play. His Vices are the Subject of all the Pleasantry : and he is sufficiently punish'd, in being disappointed and expos'd. The Expectation of his being persecuted for the twenty Pounds, gives the Conclusion too tragical a Turn. Besides, it is poetick Justice that *Ford* should sustain this Loss, as a Fine for his unreasonable Jealousy.

Page.

300 *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Page. Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you, how you should know my daughter by her garments?

Slender. I went to her in white and cry'd *mun*, and she cry'd *budget*, as *Anne* and I had appointed, and yet it was not *Anne*, but a post-master's boy.

Eva. Jeshu! Master *Slender*, cannot you see but marry boys?

Page. O, I am vext at Heart. What shall I do?

Mrs. Page. Good *George* be not angry; I knew of your purpose, turn'd my daughter into green, and, indeed she is now with the Doctor at the Deanary, and there married.

Enter Caius.

Caius. Ver is mistress *Page*? by gar, I am cozen'd; I ha' marry'd one garsoon, a boy; one peasant, by gar, A boy; it is not *Anne Page*; by gar, I am cozen'd.

Mrs. Page. Why? did you not take her in green?

Caius. Ay, be gar, and 'tis a boy; be gar, I'll raise all *Windsor*.

Ford. This is strange! who hath got the right *Anne*?

Page. My heart milgives me; here comes Mr. *Fenton*.

Enter Fenton, and Anne Page.

How now, Mr. *Fenton*?

Anne. Pardon, good father; good my mother, pardon.

Page. Now, mistress, how chance you went not with Mr. *Slender*?

Mrs. Page. Why went you not with Mr. Doctor, maid?

Fent. You do amaze her: Hear the truth of it.

You would have marry'd her most shamefully,

Where there was no proportion held in love:

The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,

Are now so sure, that nothing can dissolve us.

Th' offence is holy, that she hath committed;

And this deceit loses the name of craft,

Of disobedience, or unduteous title;

Since therein she doth evitate and shun

A thou-

A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Ford. Stand not amaz'd, here is no remedy.

In love, the heav'ns themselves do guide the state;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

Fal. I am glad, tho' you have ta'en a special Stand
To strike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

Page. Well, what remedy? Fenton, heav'n give thee
joy;

What cannot be eschew'd, must be embrac'd.

Eva. I will also dance and eat plums at your Wed-
ding.

Fal. When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are
chac'd.

Mrs. Page. Well, I will muse no further. Mr. Fen-
ton,

Heav'n give you many, many merry days.

Good husband, let us every one go home,

And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire,

Sir John and all.

Ford. Let it be so:—Sir John,

To master Brook you yet shall hold your word;

For he, to night, shall lye with mistress Ford.

[Ex. Omnes.]



102

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